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Defining a self in one's family.

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DEFINING A SELF IN ONE'S FAMILY

A Dissertation Presented

By

ANNE TOBIN-ASHE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February

1979

EDUCATION

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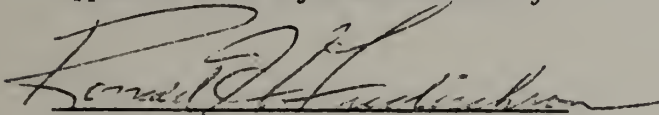
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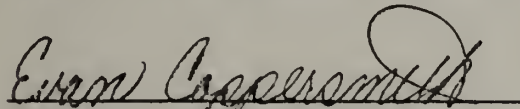
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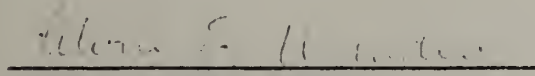
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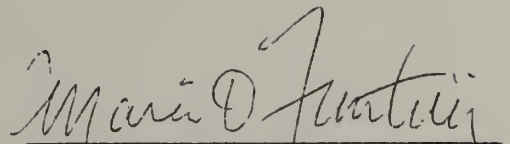
ANNE TOBIN-ASHE

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DEDICATION

To my father, John Tobin, I affirm his life message:

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

-Hamlet I, iii

In memory of my mother and friend, Anne Scheibly Tobin, who died shortly before I began the doctoral program, I dedicate this work as both an end and a beginning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been my experience to define a self in one's academic family is quite akin to defining a self in one's own family: each endeavor requires an objective assessment of the system, an examination of self functioning within the system, thoughtful study and planning, committed effort, continued contact, acceptance of setbacks and leaps forward, and periodical re-evaluations of content and process, so the act of definition can deepen and grow.

In the light of defining a self in this academic family, I am particularly grateful to my chairperson, Dr. Ronald Fredrickson. He has been a committed, efficient mentor, expectant of capable performance; an encourager, a questioner, a well chosen kin in an academic family. I appreciate also my other committee members--the diligent effort of Dr. Evan Coppersmith and the thoughtful ruminations of Dr. Alvin Winder.

I am indebted to Murray Bowen who responded to my questions. From his teachings and example I have begun the work of systems "seeing." I accept with gratitude his gifts of kindness and understanding. To the Training Committee at the Georgetown University Family Center who granted permission to conduct this study, to Lillian Winer at the Center and most particularly to the participants without whom this study would not be possible, I am particularly grateful.

To Pauline Ashby, friend, who typed the manuscript with care and precision, to Joe Devine, Peter Titelman and Bob Valentine who read the manuscript and made suggestions, I am indebted.

To my best friend, my husband, Matt, and to those young adults who are the next generation of Tobin-Ashe--Mary, Marice, Matthew and Brian, I revel in their respect for family accomplishment, and I recognize in each of them, future achievements dreamed, and even yet, undreamed.

ABSTRACT

DEFINING A SELF IN ONE'S FAMILY

(February 1979)

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This study examined change over time in defining a self in one's family in relation to mother, father, spouse and when applicable, ex-spouse among members of the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy at the Georgetown University Family Center under the direction of Murray Bowen, M.D. Areas of measurement and evaluation included:

Characteristic behavior under stress in differentiating,
attacking, withdrawing and passive response patterns

Contacts made for detriangling purposes

Planned strategies initiated for change

Level of satisfaction in relationship

Level of cut off in relationship

Level of differentiation

Phase in coaching

The study commenced in June 1977 at the end of the first year in the 1976 Program and ended in May 1978. Twenty-two participants completed all self-report questionnaires. Fifteen of them were tape-interviewed at the

end of the study. Subjects were divided into two groups:

Group 1, trainees, who continued in the 1976 Program for a second year of training.

Group 2, former trainees who ended their training at the end of the first year of training.

The emergent trend indicated a steady movement among members of group one toward an increased ability to define a self in one's family as examined in this study, and a movement among members of group two toward a decreased ability to do likewise. It further highlighted the long term nature of the defining a self process and pointed to the need to design the Special Postgraduate Training Program at Georgetown as a three year commitment to training with the possible option of extending that commitment.

Implications:

1. that the defining a self process in one's family will become more fully understood as a process of long term systems change.
2. that the Training Committee at the Georgetown University Family Center elicit a three year commitment for training before admittance to the program.
3. that researchers in the field of family study may use this document as source material for further research in the field.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Questions	5
Definition of Terms	6
Summary	12
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Bowen Systems Theory	13
The Training of Family Therapists.	25
Therapists' Own Families.	30
Other Therapists and Work with the Family of Origin.	33
Summary	36
III. METHOD AND DESIGN	38
Restatement of the Problem.	38
Questions	39
Subjects	40
Procedure	42
Data Analysis	44

CHAPTER	Page
IV. RESULTS	47
Question 1.	49
Question 2.	53
Question 3.	62
Question 4.	68
Question 5.	79
Question 6.	87
Question 7.	93
Question 8.	102
V. DISCUSSION.	106
Introduction	106
Findings	106
Additional Findings	111
Conclusions and Implications	115
Limitations.	131
Implications for Further Research	134
Summary.	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY	138
APPENDICES	149
Appendix A - Bowen's Letter	149
Appendix B - Questionnaire: 'Defining A Self in One's Family'.	150
Appendix C - Questionnaire: "Defining A Self in One's Family".	170
Appendix D - Graphs: Response Patterns Under Stress	187
Appendix E - Graphs: Level of Satisfaction.	195
Appendix F - Transcript of a Taped Interview.	198

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Percentage of Change in Differentiating Behavior by Group, Over Time.	50
2	Percentage of Change in Attacking Behavior by Group, Over Time.	54
3	Percentage of Change in Withdrawing and Passive Behavior by Group, Over Time	59
4	Percentage of Change in Contacts Made for Detriangling Purposes by Group, Over Time	65
5	Average Number of Detriangling Contacts by Group, Over Time	67
6	Percentage of Change in Use of Planned Strategies by Group, Over Time	72
7	Average Use of Planned Strategies by Group, Over Time	77
8	Percentage of Change in Level of Satisfaction by Group, Over Time.	80
9	Percentage of Change in Level of Cut Off by Group, Over Time	88
10	Percentage of Level of Differentiation by Group, for Each Testing Period.	100-101
11	Average Phase in "Coaching" by Group, Over Time	103

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration		Page
1	The Emotional Triangle	17
2	The Basic Triangle with Interlocking Triangles	18

C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

This study examined change over time in defining a self in one's family of origin. Ever since Murray Bowen, M.D. presented his paper "On the Differentiating of a Self" (Bowen 1972) at the historic meeting of Family Therapists at Temple University in 1967, trainees of family systems theory have followed a similar direction in establishing adult to adult relationships with members of their family of origin. Bowen's pioneering work described the process used to define a self in his family's emotional system. His description has become a guide for others to follow.

His work was based on a theoretical understanding of emotional functioning in family systems. That emotional functioning became the framework upon which Bowen Theory was constructed and included a differentiation of self scale, a multigenerational transmission process, in which patterns and processes from the past were incorporated into the present; a family projection process, in which patterns and processes from the present were incorporated into the future; and a nuclear family emotional system, in which patterns and processes of the present were examined. It also included operationalized and interlocking triangles; emotional flow involving fusions and cut offs; reactions to sibling positions; and a response to societal regression

(Bowen, 1965, 1971, 1971b, 1972, 1976, 1978).

Bowen (1974f) postulated that there were emotional forces in all family systems that pushed individuals toward fusion and cut offs. Kerr (1974b) called these "forces for togetherness" and "forces for individuality." Fogarty (1974a) referred to them as "laws of closeness" and "laws of distance." To become objective about those forces, and thereby gain control over them, has been the core endeavor in the defining of a self in the family of origin emotional system. In order to accomplish this life-long task it has been necessary to understand these forces and the way they operated, how self responded to them, and how self could "change self" in response to these conflictual forces. To do so was to define a self in one's family. Dr. Bowen has described that process as follows:

The research study requires that he begin to gain control over his emotional reactivity to his family, that he visit his parental family as often as indicated, and that he develop the ability to become a more objective observer in his own family. As the system becomes more "open" and he can begin to see triangles, and the part he plays in the family reaction patterns, he can begin the more complex process toward differentiating himself from the myths, images, distortions and the triangles he had not previously seen. This is a big order and a mission that cannot be accomplished quickly.¹

Supporting Bowen, Kerr added specificity by pointing out the effects differentiating work with one's parents and siblings had on the nuclear family system:

¹Bowen, 1974f, p. 79.

My current belief is that differentiation of self can be most efficiently and perhaps most effectively accomplished by successful efforts in the relationship to one's parents, siblings, and larger family system. This statement is not intended to minimize the importance of working out the relationship system in the nuclear family, but it does appear that what is gained in successful differentiation in the family of origin transfers easily to one's nuclear family.²

In this study both relationships with mother and father in the family of origin and spouse and/or ex-spouse in the nuclear family were examined.

The work of self-definition was begun in the family of origin by connecting or reconnecting in a person-to-person relationship with each living member of the extended family. The connecting step was succeeded by developing an objective awareness of the patterns, processes and triangles operating in the system. As the trainee gained further objectivity about the part self played in the system, aided by direction of a "coach", s/he became involved in detriangling self from the emotional system according to strategies planned for that purpose (Bowen 1972, 1974f).

Statement of the Problem

Knowledge was needed about change in relationship over time in defining a self as it took place among trainees in a training program based upon the teachings and theoretical principles described by Murray Bowen. Attempts similar to this study had been made by McCullough (1976) and Smith (1977), but were not conducted on trainees at the Georgetown University

²Kerr, 1974b, p. 55.

Family Center where Bowen was the Director, nor were they available in completed form for comparison purposes at the onset of this study.

This study attempted to examine the process of defining a self, by exploring behavioral changes which occurred over time in relation to mother, father, spouse, and ex-spouse. It did so by comparing two groups of mental health professionals, each trainees in the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy at the Georgetown University Family Center, Washington, D.C. under the direction of Bowen.

Group one was composed of trainees who spent two years in the training program; group two, former trainees who left the program after the first year of training. The ten month study commenced in June 1977, just after the end of the first year of training.

The expectation of this study was that trainees in group one who remained in the training program for two years would have maintained a higher level of differentiating behavior and a lower level of attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress; that they made more de-triangling contacts and initiated more planned strategies for change; that they were more satisfied, less cut off and more differentiated in their relationships, and more advanced in their phase of coaching, than former trainees in group two.

Questions

With those expectations in mind, the following questions have been asked:

1. Have trainees in group one maintained a higher level of differentiating behavior while under stress in relationship to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than former trainees in group two?
2. Have trainees in group one maintained a lower level of attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than for trainees in group two?
3. Have trainees in group one initiated the following contacts for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling or defining a self more frequently than former trainees in group two?
 - a. letter writing
 - b. telephone calls
 - c. planned visits
4. Have trainees in group one initiated the following strategies for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling or defining a self more frequently than members of group two?
 - a. use of humor
 - b. use of reversals

c. use of "I" position

6

d. issue dealing

e. depersonalized examples

5. Have members of group one been more satisfied than members of group two in relating to particular family members?
6. Have members of group one been less emotionally cut off than members of group two?
7. Have members of group one been more differentiated than members of group two?
8. Have members of group one been more advanced in their phase of coaching than members of group two?

Definition of Terms

CHANGE was equated with the differentiation process and was described by Bowen as "a big order and a mission that cannot be accomplished quickly" (Bowen 1974f, p. 79). In order to differentiate or CHANGE, Bowen set down the steps in defining a self in one's family:

1. Gain control over one's emotional reactivity to one's family.
2. Visit the family as often as indicated.
3. Develop the ability to become an objective observer in one's own family.
4. When one's objectivity expands and the triangles become more clear, assess the part one plays in the family reaction pattern.
5. Begin the slow process of differentiation.

6. Recognize that differentiation is "a big order and cannot be accomplished quickly."

The COACH was a term used interchangeably with therapist.

Since family systems theory does not view change as something brought about through an extra family relationship, such as a corrective relationship with a therapist, concepts such as transference and therapeutic relationship are not part of the approach. The family systems therapist work to avoid direct emotional involvement with his client, while still establishing a work relationship with him. . . . The coach will not want to become emotionally more important to a client than his family members are, nor to be more concerned or responsible for the clients' life decisions and actions than the client is himself. . . . when the client's anxiety is low and he is able to think objectively about his family patterns and his own part in them, the coach may help to stimulate ideas about ways to proceed by giving direct suggestions, or relating examples of how other clients, or the coach himself, handled similar situations in their families. Therapists who have not been coached through work in their own families are generally not successful in coaching others past the initial re-entry steps. (Carter and Orfonidis, 1976)

The CUT OFF or emotional cut off was manifested by:

A denial of the intensity of the unresolved emotional attachment to parents, acting and pretending to be more independent than one is, and emotional distance achieved either through internal mechanisms or physical distance. . . . The person who achieves emotional distance with internal mechanisms. . . is able to stay on the scene in periods of emotional tension but he is more prone to dysfunction within self such as physical illness, emotional dysfunction such as depression, and social dysfunction such as drinking and episodic irresponsibility in relation to others. (Bowen, 1974f)

DEFINING SELF was a term used interchangeably with "differentiation of a self". It was defined as:

. . . the degree to which a person becomes emotionally "differentiated" from the parent. . . The term "differentiation of self" was chosen as one that most accurately describes this long-term process in which the child slowly disengages from the original fusion with his mother and moves toward his own emotional autonomy. (Bowen, 1974f)

The process of differentiating can be rather simply defined: It consists of developing personal relationships with each member of the family, particularly with each parent: and of detriangling oneself, or changing one's part in the old repetitious, dysfunctional emotional patterns that involve multiple family members particularly when family tension is high. (Carter and Orfanidis, 1976)

It refers to where do I begin and where do I end, and where does the other person begin and where do I end, and where does the other person begin and where does he end. (Fogarty, 1974c)

Greater differentiation of self means that an individual can relate to an intense emotional system, whether it be the nuclear family system, work system, social system, extended family system or some other system and have his thinking and action influenced less than it was before by the emotional forces of the system. (Kerr, 1974b)

DEPERSONALIZED EXAMPLES referred to citing a similar example from the life of an unnamed person or telling a story about someone in a similar situation. These examples frequently began with, "I once knew a woman who . . . , " or, "Recently I had a client who. . . ." Depersonalization established a degree of distance between the person and the situation;

its examples were used to make a point that could not be easily heard otherwise.

DETRIANGLING PROCESS was the act of being "constantly in contact with an emotional issue involving two other people and self, without taking sides with either side, without counterattacking or defending self, and to always have a neutral response." (Bowen, 1974f)

According to Carter and Orfanidis, "detriangling"

is the process whereby one of these three (of the three person relationship) frees himself from the enmeshment of the three, and develops person-to-person relationships with each of the other two. Involvement in triangles and interlocking triangles which span the generations is one of the key mechanisms whereby patterns of relating and functioning are transmitted over the generations in a family. (Carter and Orfanidis, 1976)

DIFFERENTIATION was a term used interchangeably with defining a self or detriangling a self, fundamentally in the primary relationship with one's parents: "A differentiated self is one who can maintain emotional objectivity while in the midst of an emotional system in turmoil, yet at the same time actively relate to key people in the system." (Bowen, 1972)

EMOTIONAL SYSTEM "Is a dynamic state. There exists an interaction of opposing forces: forces for differentiation, ultimately a self-determined direction and forces for togetherness, ultimately a system-determined direction. These forces are constantly in flux and operating at varying levels of togetherness or undifferentiation. The impact of the

emotional system on the activity of the organisms that comprise that system depends most basically on the differentiation of those organisms." (Kerr, 1974a)

EXTENDED FAMILY included mother, father, siblings, spouse, children, maternal and paternal grandparents, and significant others (ex-spouse, step children, etc.).

FAMILY OF ORIGIN referred to one's parents and siblings.

FUSION referred to that condition occurring when "one person overlaps the other so that there is an indistinctness of self-identification and self-differentiation. It is difficult to tell what is self and what is the other person. It is difficult to tell where self ends and the other begins." (Fogarty, 1975)

"I" POSITION referred to one making a "calm statement of his beliefs or feelings without having to attack others to defend himself. In his person-to-person relationships he can relate openly, without needing to talk about others or to focus on activities or impersonal things in order to find common ground." (Carter and Orfanidis 1976)

INTACT FAMILY referred to the family in which there is an absence of death, divorce and emotional cut offs, at least to a moderate degree--more simply, the family that has remained essentially intact.

ISSUE DEALING referred to the acknowledging and accommodating of an emotional issue heretofore tacitly existing between the individual and a particular member of his family.

LEVEL OF DIFFERENTIATION described the degree to which one was differentiated from family members.

NUCLEAR FAMILY referred to a two generation family composed of parents and children.

A REVERSAL consisted in "saying the opposite of what is usually said in response to someone else. The reversal expresses the unspoken and unacknowledged other side of an issue, and tends to break up rigid, predictable, repetitive communication patterns." (Carter and Orfanidis, 1976)

SOCIETAL REGRESSION expressed the concept that families under constant and chronic strain began "to lose contact with its intellectually determined principles, and to resort more and more to emotionally determined decisions to allay the anxiety of the moment." (Bowen, 1978)

STRESS indicated those times in relationship when anxiety or an emotional reactivity was produced.

TRIANGLES "are the predictable emotional pattern or patterns in which three people relate to each other, any threesome." (Terkelson, 1974)

Their structure:

Can be defined as three points connected by three lines. Two intersect at each point. The result is three points, three angles and each point has two lines going from it. Each point also faces one line that it has no direct connection to. A triangle then, is not just three points but three interconnecting lines. If one adds up the length of the lines and maintains this sum of the distances as a constant, then any shift in the position of one point will

necessarily influence the position of the other points. If the sum of the distances between the points is a constant, then we have a closed system. If the sum of the distances between the three points is not a constant but can fluctuate, then a shift in the position of one point will not necessarily influence the position of the other points. This is an open system. Emotionally speaking, a triangle is always a closed system. If the system is open, the structure is a threesome. Mathematically speaking, the problem with the three points is that the lines (relationships) are fixed, closed, determinative of each other. Movement in such a closed system is reciprocal--movement in one position necessarily creates movement in the other positions. (Fogarty, 1975)

UNDIFFERENTIATION signified the opposite of differentiation. It is "the degree of our unresolved emotional attachment to families of origin." (Bowen, 1974f)

Summary

This study examined change over time in defining a self in one's family of origin among trainees in the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy at the Georgetown University Family Center, directed by Murray Bowen, M.D. It did so by comparing participants who were in the training program for two years with participants who left the program after the first year of training. The framework of the study was based on the theoretical concepts of Bowen Theory and included measurement and evaluation of trainees as they proceeded with the work of defining a self in their family of origin, particularly in relation to mother, father, spouse, and ex-spouse. The study began in June 1977 and concluded in May 1978.

C H A P T E R I I

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter offers an examination of the writings of Murray Bowen in relation to the theory he developed and the application of that theory to the process of defining a self in one's family, particularly as it was applied to the training of family therapists at the Georgetown University Family Center. The works of authors of similar persuasions were also included, as were the anecdotal accounts of therapists who applied the principles of Bowen Theory to research in defining a self within the emotional structure of their own family. The pragmatic arguments of a growing body of respected family therapists, not of Bowen persuasion, who also saw relevance in work with the family of origin, were also included. This chapter summarized those writings and attempted to connect them to the emergent theme of this study.

Bowen Systems Theory

The emotional functioning of family systems has been explored and examined through the theoretical writings of Murray Bowen (1965a, 1965b, 1966, 1971a, 1971c, 1974a, 1974c, 1975a, 1976a, 1976b). "Bowen is in the minority in having developed a coherent and cohesive clinical theoretical

framework upon which to base his orientation to family therapy."¹ The eight concepts of that clinical theoretical framework are listed below:

1. Differentiation of Self
2. Emotional triangle
3. Nuclear family emotional system
4. Family projection process
5. Multigenerational transmission process
6. Emotional cut off
7. Sibling position
8. Societal regression

Differentiation of Self defined one's degree of fusion, or differentiation, between emotional and intellectual functioning. It is the degree to which one was autonomous, or non-autonomous. At the lower extremes of differentiation were those individuals whose emotions and intellect were so fused, that their lives were dominated by the automatic emotional system. These were the people who were less flexible, less adaptable, and more emotionally dependent on those about them. They were easily stressed into dysfunction and they inherited a high percentage of all human problems.

At the other extreme level of functioning were those individuals who were more differentiated. It was possible for them to recognize a separation between emotional and intellectual functioning. They retained relative

¹ Peter Titelman, Ph.D. "Bowen's Family Systems Theory: Natural Science or Human Science?" Second Pittsburgh Family Systems Symposium, University of Pittsburgh, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, 1978.

autonomy in periods of stress and were more flexible, more adaptable, and more independent of the emotionality about them. They coped better with life stresses, lead a more orderly and successful life and were generally free of human problems. Between the two extremes lay any number of possibilities for a mixed degree of emotional and intellectual functioning (Bowen 1976).

Bowen (1971a) developed a differentiation of self scale. The following was a list of characteristics found in individuals at varying levels on the scale.

1. 0-25 Range. People with the most intense degree of ego fusion and with little differentiation of self. They could not differentiate between a feeling world and an intellectual system. They were incapable of using the differentiated "I"--(I am, I believe, I will do, I will not do). They were dominated by others.
2. 25-50 Range. People here were those with less intense ego fusion and with a poorly defined sense of self, or a budding capacity to differentiate a self. Major decisions were based on feelings. Love and approval were sought as goals in themselves. Energy was only partly goal directed.
3. 50-75 Range. This range included those people with higher levels of differentiation and much lower degrees of ego fusion. Those in this group had fairly well-defined opinions and beliefs on most essential issues, but pressure for conformity was great, and under

sufficient stress they could compromise principle and make feeling decisions rather than risk the displeasure of others by standing for their convictions. People in this group had more energy for goal-directed activity and less energy tied up in keeping the emotional system in equilibrium.

4. 75-100 Range. These were principle oriented, goal-directed people. They were sure of their beliefs and convictions but were never dogmatic or fixed in thinking. They assumed total responsibility for self and were sure of their responsibility for family and society. They maintained a well-defined "self" and engaged in intense emotional relationships at the same time.

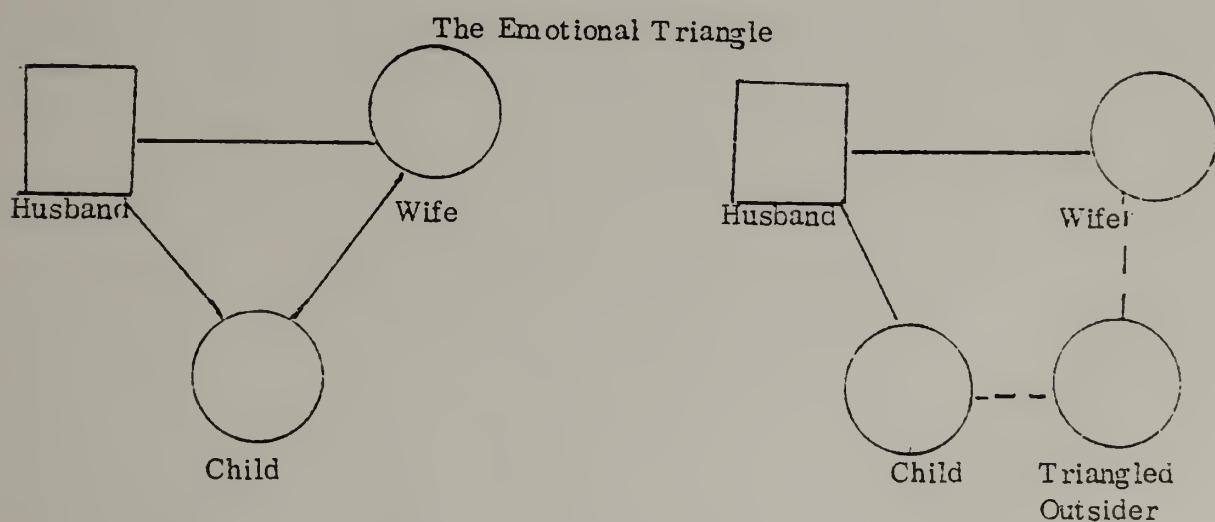
Commenting upon an increased sense of differentiation of self, and the effect it had on one's life, Kerr noticed that:

Greater differentiation of self means that an individual can relate to an intense emotional system, whether it be the nuclear family system, work system, social system, extended family system or some other system and have his thinking and action influenced less than it was before by the emotional forces of the system. A person's thoughts and actions come to be based on a somewhat more objective appraisal of what is going on in the relationship system. What the individual thinks is less influenced by what others think; how the individual acts is less influenced by how others act. People who gain in the ability to do this even when the anxiety in an emotional system is very high, have changed significantly. It is not an easy task, but if accomplished leads to a major change in a person's orientation to life."²

²

Kerr, 1974, p. 55.

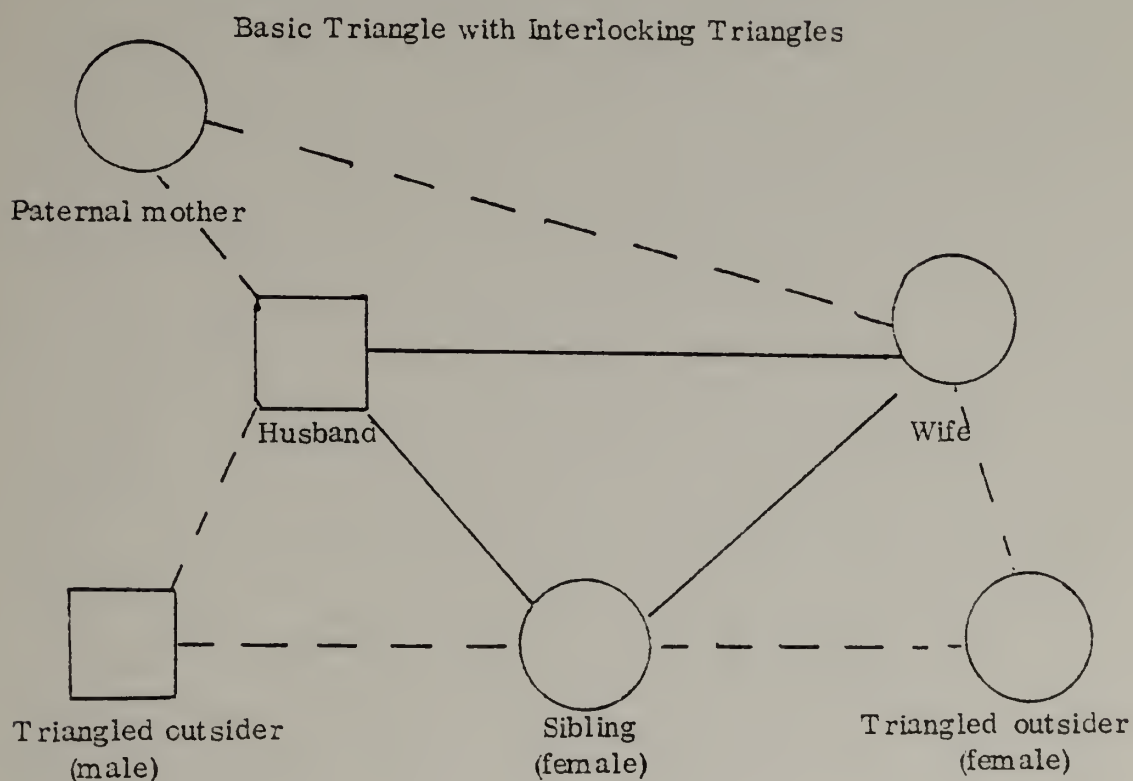
The Emotional Triangle, the second concept of the theory explained, was referred to as the "fusion-exclusion compensatory mechanism." In the use of this term, one referred to the principle of fusion in which two people, or a person and an issue, or a person and an object created a fusion with each other, leaving one part in the outside, or excluded, position. This is one other way of speaking about the concept more popularly referred to as the emotional triangle. The triangle was constantly in motion, even during times of relative calm because the person in the somewhat outside position negotiated within the triangle to form a more comfortable position, or negotiated outside the triangle to form an interlocking triangle, as seen below. During periods of calm the triangle was frequently comfortable and very often functional.



Basic Triangle

Basic Triangle in Transition

During times of stress, the choice position in the triangle was in the outside position. This was the more comfortable position because it avoided the stress existing within the two person system. If it was impossible to shift forces in the triangle, one person in the three will detriangle in a fourth, leaving the outsider for later involvement. Now the forces repeated themselves in the new triangle, as seen in the following diagram.



In a dysfunctional family, a chronic triangle developed. Fogarty (1971a, 1975) made distinction between the chronic triangular relationship that represented emotions stuck in repetitive non-functioning patterns and the threesome, described as a "functional relationship between three people and/or objects." The triangle occurred in a closed emotional system; the threesome in an open emotional system.

The Nuclear Family Emotional System, the third concept of the theory, was a term used to refer not only to the nuclear family, but the extended family as well. The term implied a type of fusion of ego boundaries which resulted in the incorporation of two or more people into a fused emotional oneness where boundaries overlapped in such a way that it was difficult to determine where one person ended and the other began. The point was that all fused systems need not necessarily be dysfunctional, but when a system is dysfunctional, there almost inevitably existed a form of fusion that is unhealthy for that system.

In Family Systems terms, Andres (1974) noted that unhealthy fusion was usually demonstrated in one, or more, of three ways:

1. Through marital conflict in which neither party gave in to the other:

In this type of relationship, each party was greatly invested in the other, either positively or negatively. A spirit of intense interdependence existed. The relationship was such that periods of closeness were followed by conflict and then a period of making up followed by closeness and then more conflict. The psychic

- energy invested in the other spouse, protected the children from over-involvement.
2. Through dysfunction in a spouse: In this form, one spouse lost self to the other and became dysfunctional, leaving the other to become overly functioning. Marriages of this variety usually resulted in the overly-functioning spouse assuming responsibility for decision-making, rearing of children, and carrying the burdens of the family. The submissive one, or dysfunctional one, frequently developed some form of illness of an emotional, physical or social nature. Frequently, marriages of this type continued for years with the dominant and submissive couple maintaining the equilibrium of the marriage in this dysfunctional manner.
 3. Through projection of the problem to the child: When this traditional pattern occurred in families, the family "consists of a mother who is more invested in her children than she is in her husband, and a father who is sensitive to the anxiety of his wife."³ The parent projected his/her undifferentiated self onto the child in the form of anxiety, overconcern, infantilizing, and overattachment. Sibling position, the mother's preference for boys or for girls, and the mother's level of anxiety at the time of the child's birth were all factors contributing to the selection of the child to be fused. Bowen

³ Andres, 1974, p. 10.

believed this process existed in all families to some extent because almost all families were composed of people who were not fully differentiated. This projection is a form of passing the undifferentiated aspect of self from one generation to the next.

The Family Projection Process, the fourth concept, described the microscopic process through which parents transmit their problems to their children. In the usual situation one child was more emotionally interlocked with the parents than the others. This child emerged with a lower level of differentiation than the parents, while most children emerged into adulthood with about the same levels as their parents. There are others who grow up more outside the parental emotional process, and who emerge with higher levels of differentiation than the parents, as described below. This was the child who was the focus of parental, usually maternal, anxiety, overprotection and worry. The child picked up the maternal concerns; and the parent, rather than owning them and working them through, saw them as existing in the child rather than in self. In other words, the parent projected the problem onto the most fused child who owned the parental problem as his/her own.

Multigenerational Transmission Process, the fifth concept referred to the above mentioned project process, continued for many generations. The child frequently became the focus of the most intense parental projection, mentioned above. This was the child who was most fused, usually with the mother. Because of the intensity of the fusion that existed between parent and child, the child developed at a lower level of differentiation than the

parents, thereby carrying into future generations this lowered form of differentiation, a pattern to be subsequently repeated in succeeding generations. As one child was most fused, and consequently less differentiated from the parents, one child at the same time was the least involved in the parental projection process. This was the child most free to develop a Self. Because of the lack of intensity that existed between parent and child, the child developed at a higher level of differentiation than the parents, thereby carrying into future generations this higher form of differentiation, possibly repeated in succeeding generations. The remaining child/ren would usually maintain a level of differentiation similar to that of parents and would pass on that same level of differentiation to succeeding generations. This process can stabilize from time to time in that a lower level person can stabilize, and the same too with a higher level person. Bowen has attributed to the multi-generational transmission process the explanation for the development of schizophrenia over eight to ten generations produced by lower level functioning individuals.

The Emotional Cut Off, the sixth concept, referred to the degree to which individuals sever emotional connectedness with their own or other generations within the family system.

The life pattern of cut offs is determined by the way people handle their unresolved emotional attachments to their parents. All people have some degree of unresolved emotional attachment to their parents. The lower the level of differentiation, the more intense the unresolved attachment. The concept

deals with the way people separate themselves from the past in order to start their lives in the present generation. The unresolved attachment is handled by the intrapsychic process of denial and isolation of self while living close to the parents; or by physically running away, or by a combination of emotional isolation and physical distance.⁴

Several examples of the emotional cut off were prevalent: the run away adolescent, the divorced couple who maintain no contact with each other, the nuclear family devoid of intergenerational contact because of distance, the unresolved family death. Cut offs existed intrapsychically through withdrawal from contact with others. This can take place within the nuclear family situation when family members did not deal with the emotional issues between each other, and reached its most extreme form in the psychotic person who withdraws from society altogether.

Sibling Position, the seventh concept, was borrowed from Toman (1961, 1974), who borrowed it from Adler (1929) where it was referred to as birth-order position. It stated that all things being equal, certain personality and behavioral characteristics were attributed to individuals by the very order of their birth in sibling rank. Toman developed ten basic sibling profiles which described the personality configurations of family members based upon their position in sibling order and the sex composition of that ordering. For example, a youngest sister of brothers, related to the world differently than an oldest sister of brothers. So too, a youngest brother of sisters related to the world differently than an oldest brother of sisters. Bowen holds that

⁴Bowen, 1976a, p. 84.

knowledge of sibling position made "it possible to assemble reliable presumptive personality profiles on people in past generations on whom verifiable facts are missing" and in relation to use in therapy stated that "no single piece of data is more important than knowing the sibling position of people in the present and past generations."⁵

For the above stated reasons sibling position has been incorporated by Bowen as the seventh of his theoretical principles.

Societal Regression, the eighth concept stated:

That when a family is subjected to chronic, sustained anxiety, the family begins to lose contact with its intellectually determined principles, and to resort more and more to emotionally determined decisions to allay the anxiety of the moment. The results of this process are symptoms and eventually regression to a lower level of functioning. The societal concept postulates that the same process is evolving in society; that we are in a period of increasing chronic societal anxiety; that society responds to this with emotionally determined decisions to allay the anxiety of the moment; that this results in symptoms of dysfunction; that the efforts to relieve the symptoms result in more emotional, band-aid legislation, which increases the problem; and that the cycle keeps repeating, just as the family goes through similar cycles to the states we call emotional illness.⁶

This last concept was most recently added to Bowen Theory, creating a bridge between the understanding of emotional functioning within the family system and the understanding of emotional functioning within the society at large. Bowen postulated that societies, like families, respond to continued

⁵ Bowen, 1976a, p. 37,

⁶ Bowen, 1976a, p. 38.

and prolonged stress and that when anxiety was rampant in a society, members of that society began to behave less rationally. Similarly, when anxiety was low in a society, as in a family, groups and individuals functioned more calmly and rationally. He contended that the issues of world hunger, overpopulation, lack of ecological responsibility were present causes for increased anxiety within society and sources for societal regression.

The first six concepts of Bowen Theory described the emotional ways in which families function. The seventh, sibling position, described the possible predetermined effect sibling position could have on behavioral functioning, and the eighth, and last concept, societal regression created a bridge between the emotional functioning of families with the emotional functioning of societies.

The Training of Family Therapists

Trainees at the Georgetown Family Center were coached in the work of applying the fundamentals of Bowen Theory in the observation and understanding of their own extended family emotional functioning as well as to the families they saw in clinical practice.

Before Dr. Bowen's 1967 "Differentiation of a Self" paper in which he explained his differentiating work with his own family of origin, he was "committed to the notion that the fastest and the best change in psychotherapy came from working out the relationship between self and the one

most important other person in one's life,"⁷ usually the spouse. After the 1967 presentation, some changes occurred. Therapists-in-training began to follow Dr. Bowen's example and rather than focusing detriangling work on the spouse relationship, they began to use the concepts in visits with their parental families. Later in 1967 and through 1969, Bowen noticed that this group of residents were doing better clinical work as family therapists than any previous residents. "At first I considered this to be an unusually good group of residents. Then it became clear that it was the residents who had done best in the effort with their parental families who were also doing best in their clinical work."⁸

So, the clinical training became focused on trainees' use of the theoretical concepts in defining a self in their extended family. Kerr supported this belief by stating:

My current belief is that the differentiation of self can be most efficiently and perhaps most effectively accomplished by successful efforts in the relationship to one's parents, siblings and larger family system. This statement is not intended to minimize the importance of working out the relationship system in the nuclear family, but it does appear that what is gained in successful differentiation in the family of origin transfers easily to one's nuclear family. Therefore, for highly motivated people, direct focus on the marital relationship is probably not really necessary.⁹

⁷ Bowen, 1974f, p. 73.

⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

⁹ Kerr, 1974b, p. 55.

Bowen further concluded that:

Families in which the focus is on the differentiation of self in the families of origin automatically make as much, or more, progress in working out the relationship system with spouses and children as families seen in formal family therapy in which there is a principle focus on the interdependence in the marriage.¹⁰

The study and work on the trainees' own family became a mandatory part of the Georgetown curriculum, supplemented with theoretical and clinical seminars, and supervision of the trainees' clinical work. There appeared to be a relationship between work done by a therapist in his/her own family and clinical proficiency as a family therapist.

I believe and teach that the family therapist usually has the very same problems in his own family that are present in the families he sees professionally and that he has a responsibility to define himself in his own family if he is to function adequately in his professional work.¹¹

The rationale for this approach applied to the training of therapist, has carried most conviction with professionals in the field who have found personal success. McCullough (1976), in her research on high performer trainees, found there were certain characteristics of the families of trainees who had motivation for this work. She called those characteristics "intactness of family structure" and found them evidenced by:

1. both parents being alive (and thus available to the student)
2. absence of major cut offs, and

¹⁰ Bowen, 1974f, p. 83.

¹¹ Bowen, 1972, p. 133.

3. (with one exception) continued contact of the individual with both sides of the family.¹²

Meyer (1976) viewed the defining a self process, developmentally taking place in four repetitive and deepening phases under the direction of a coach who had effectively defined a self in his/her own family. The coach acted as an objective guide to the individual, whether s/he be client or family therapy trainee. Orderly phases repeated themselves as the trainee (or client) clarified him/herself in relation to the emotional family system in more profound and all encompassing patterns. Those phases were:

Phase one: identification of family patterns and processes.

Phase two: identification of the part that self plays in the patterns identified in the earlier phase.

Phase three: thoughtful preparation of strategies by which a self can terminate his participation in the dysfunctional family pattern.

Phase four: the work of therapy: carrying out the strategies.¹³

She continued to describe more fully the four phases of this process:

Phase one. Phase one represented the foundation upon which any therapy would follow. It was a phase too often minimized and sometimes skipped altogether. It was completed through the persuance of multiple questions about how the family handled its living: such as patterns of discipline, patterns of speaking to one another, patterns of handling re-

¹² McCullough, 1976, p. 13.

¹³ Meyer, 1976, p. 1.

sponsibility. It was not completed until the client identified for self, the major patterns or themes found in his family.

Phase two. In this phase, the therapist-in-training, or client was assisted in identifying and discovering for self, the part of the problem that belonged to them as opposed to others in the family. The coach assisted in this process through asking appropriate questions. If the participants did not "buy" a part of the responsibility for the problem, then all efforts of the coach to suggest areas of change in the participant fell on deaf ears. This was then followed by identifying the ways the dysfunctional patterns of the participant were related to, based upon, and sustained by the previous generations. Specifically, did the participant's mother manifest the same pattern, or, perhaps, did she operate in an opposite way? In other words, through questions about preceeding generations, the participant developed a multi-generational context in which to view his/her patterns of dysfunction.

Phase three. Solid change, that is, change stemming from an understanding of self, in its greatest sense occurred after the successful completion of phase one and phase two, for without understanding of the general dysfunctional patterns and specific part that self has played in sustaining such patterns, efforts at change lacked context, conviction and carry through.

Phase four. Phase four was supervision and/or coaching of the trainee or client in the areas which were defined for self in phase three.

The four above mentioned phases acted as a guide upon which Bowen Theory was filtered. That is, when the trainee could "see" the part self

played in family triangles, in the transmission of behavioral patterns from generation to generation, in family cut offs, then he/she could move into change of self. Therapists who moved through this process of defining a self in their own family, speak, below, to its effect on their lives.

Therapists' Own Families

The process of defining a self in one's family has been attempted to some degree by possibly more than one hundred people who have consistently presented their experiences to teaching sessions which have been under the direct supervision of Bowen, and other systems therapists. Several of those individuals have written about their experiences as well.

From those who have written of their experiences the act of defining a self was described as a sense of lessened anxiety and tension (Carter, 1973, Colon, 1974, Hall, 1974, Kaplan, 1974, Scarboro, 1974, and Valentine 1977). Both Valentine and Scarboro attributed their reduction of anxiety to freeing self from parental expectations. "I think I have finally come to the position in my family, that I am going to do what I want to do. If other people like it, wonderful. If they dislike it, I try to be sensitive to their concern and make sure that I am not trampling on their rights before wishing them well with their emotional upset,"¹⁴ stated Valentine. Carter reported "Throughout this year, there has been a steady reduction of tension between my husband and me and between us and our children. My insomnia has dis-

¹⁴ Valentine, 1977, p. 21.

appeared, along with the backaches, and I'm really enjoying my work again."¹⁵

This reduction of anxiety was followed for some with an increase in stability and connectedness. Both Scarboro and Colon described their sense of stability in terms of their feet being solidly planted on the ground. Said Scarboro, "I have two feet which serve as a foundation when planted solidly on the ground. I have found the difference between what I think and what others think as the sources of a growing edge of self."¹⁶ Colon, an adopted son, stated it similarly upon finishing his search to connect with both sets of his family of origin, "I now had two feet to stand on instead of one, and it was a tremendous feeling of solidness and connectedness."¹⁷

The more fully one understands one's own system, the more fully one understands other systems, particularly the family systems of clients. Friedman stated, "the more I understand about my family and my position in it the more I will understand family process in general."¹⁸ Erickson in recording his reconnecting work wrote, "I have more respect for the difficulties in change for families I see clinically, with more clarity about what I am doing with them."¹⁹ "Although I still find doing family therapy to be difficult

¹⁵Carter, 1973, p. 32.

¹⁶Scarboro, 1978, p. 14.

¹⁷Colon, 1974, p. 125.

¹⁸Friedman, 1971, p. 358.

¹⁹Erickson, 1975, p. 23.

work, I don't seem to have much difficulty lately avoiding taking sides emotionally in the families I work with,"²⁰ wrote Carter and echoed by Kaplan, who philosophised, "Professionally, I feel greater sense of belonging to the 'family of family therapists'. While aware that I've had talent, I have often felt on the outside looking in, kept out by the members who really belonged. The door seems open now, as do the doors to more of the families I work with."²¹ Valentine summed it up succinctly. "I have been learning to deal with a multitude of systems. Quite correctly, I believe, a family therapist once told me that if I could learn to deal with my own family system I would find that every other system is easy."²²

This composite of testimony echoing the results of differentiating work with one's family, took into account an improved sense of personal relatedness along with a noticed improvement in the extended family functioning. Kerr drew attention to a singular differentiating statement, "If one person can function at a higher level of differentiation in the system and stay in contact with others, the others will eventually function at higher levels."²³ Scarboro responded to this challenge poetically, "It could be that the nourishment and the sense of relatedness that we all need lies no further away than closing the distance between yourself and a person with whom you feel there is no

²⁰ Carter, 1973, p. 32.

²¹ Kaplan, 1974, p. 33.

²² Valentine, 1977, p. 20.

²³ Kerr, 1974b, p. 58.

hope for a relationship, principally, your mother and your father."²⁴

In almost every case, each writer concluded there was more work yet to be done and that the process of defining a self in one's family continues throughout life. Guerin said, "For the past three years I have continued this work and at present I see it as a lifetime work."²⁵ Paddock described differentiating work in his family around members who have died and concludes that "Interlocking triangles come to life in this process providing further opportunity for the process of differentiation."²⁶ Colon said, "I plan to continue regular visits to both extended families in the future. I anticipate new challenges, new problems, and new opportunities as I continue to get back into the family."²⁷ As Winston Churchill once concluded: "The further back one looks, the further ahead one can see." In defining a self in one's family that "looking" and that "seeing" brooks no end; it is, as seen in the testimony of these many therapists, the work of a lifetime, and the work of a life time also in the participants of this study.

Other Therapists and Work with the Family of Origin

Bowen does not stand alone in recognition of the need to involve the family of origin in systems change. A growing body of respected therapists

²⁴Scarborc, 1978, p. 14.

²⁵Guerin and Fogarty, 1972b, p. 446.

²⁶Paddock, 1974, p. 135.

²⁷Colon, 1973, p. 436.

(Boszormenyi-Nagy 1965, Beatman 1967, Spark 1974, Paul and Paul 1975, Framo 1976 and Whitaker 1976) have spoken to this issue. In Bowen's work, therapists-in-training and clients alike are sent back into the family of origin to deal directly with members of the generational framework in reconnecting and differentiating terms, supervised in their direct work by their therapist or coach. Other therapists have approached the generational work somewhat differently. Whitaker brought grandparents into the therapy session. So, too, did Framo, Spark and Beatman. Paul and Paul saw generational relationships as forming a backdrop upon which marital relationship and relationships with one's children were built. Boszormenyi-Nagy considered pathology only in system terms, defined by the past as well as the present.

Whitaker, in defending his position, and in recognition of the power exerted by the older generation and the feebleness of the individual in therapy to counteract that power, said, "I don't believe in the individual or free will at all any more. I'm tempted to say over the phone before the first visit, 'Bring three generations or don't bother to start.'"²⁸ He thereby addressed the question of disloyalty to parents in the first session, assisting the patient to feel less disloyal, and the therapist to feel less responsible for moving in a direction antagonistic to the parental mode.

Speaking to the value of bringing parents of couples into the therapeutic sessions, Framo suggested:

²⁸ Whitaker, 1976, p. 183.

Opportunities are available for genuine corrective experiences, the discovery of information about the family not heretofore known, the clarifying of old misunderstandings and misinterpretations based on childhood perceptions, and the clearing away of the magical meanings that the family members have for each other. This kind of experience also gives people the chance to get to know their parents as real people rather than as fantasy figures who have to be idealized or denigrated. Further, the way is opened up for the possibility of establishing an adult-to-adult relationship with one's parents.²⁹

Working clinically on "unfinished business between parent and grand-parents, and even siblings, facilitates structural as well as symptomatic changes in the family system,"³⁰ advised Spark. Beatman, addressing a similar problem, has said, "The therapists perception of the pervasive quality of these relationships can direct him, however, to involve the grand-parents in sessions with the family, to clarify the character of the parent-grandparent relationships, and to deal with its reciprocal and even complementary reinforcement by the parent and grandparent and with its effects on the marital interaction and parent-child relationships."³¹ Paul and Paul clearly identified their belief in the affects of the family of origin on succeeding generations. "Our thesis is that the quality of one's relationship to members of one's original family forms the unrecognized backdrop for the success or failure of one's marriage, which includes the functioning of one's children."³²

²⁹Framo, 1976, p. 200.

³⁰Spark, 1974, p. 13.

³¹Beatman, 1967, p. 29.

³²Paul and Paul, 1975, p. 9.

Boszormenyi-Nagy emphasized the fact that pathology is larger than the individual or individuals in which it exists, that it must, be described in terms of the system in which its exists.

The practicing family therapist, however, is compelled to realize that the level on which pathology exists and therapy takes place is that of a system which is more than the sum total of pathologies of the individual members as discrete entities. It is appropriate to assign a higher level of system organization to the multipersonal totality of family transactions.³³

Each of the above quoted therapists attested to the value in multi-generational work and the affects of family of origin on the functioning level of the client and the system in which the client has been born. For Bowen, whose primary focus is on the family of origin, there is no distinction in process between that which is considered responsible action for therapist-in-training and responsible action for clients in therapy. Like the Freudian analyst who had to undergo his/her own analysis before practicing the art, so too with the Bowen therapist who undergoes competent training in this modality: a knowledge of self functioning in one's family has been a prerequisite to functioning therapeutically in the families of clients.

Summary

In this chapter the writings of Murray Bowen and clinicians of similar orientation have been examined, particularly as they relate to the training of family therapists in the process of defining a self within the family emotional

³³ Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1965, p. 59.

structure. Anecdotal accounts of therapists who applied Bowen Theory while defining a self in their own family of origin have also been included. So too has the rationale of family therapists outside the Bowen persuasion who are committed to work with the family of origin. This chapter summarized the above writings and attempted to connect them to the theme of this study.

C H A P T E R I I I

METHODS AND DESIGN

Restatement of the Problem

This work was undertaken to assess change by group, over time, in defining a self in one's family among trainees at the Georgetown University Family Center, directed by Murray Bowen, M.D. It did so by measuring participants' relationship-response to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse while engaged in the act of defining a self in their family. Participants' relationship-responses were measured for change in the following area: Characteristic differentiating, and characteristic attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress. Also measured were letter, telephone and visit contacts initiated for detriangling purposes; along with five strategies initiated for the same purpose. The level of satisfaction and the level of emotional cut off in relationship were also considered, as well as the level of differentiation and the phase in therapy, or coaching, of each participant. As a result of this study it was expected that trainees in group one maintained a higher level of differentiating behavior and a lower level of attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress; that they made more detriangling contacts and initiated more planned strategies for change; that they were more satisfied, less cut off, more differentiated in their relation--

ships, and more advanced in their phase of coaching than former trainees in group two.

Questions

With those expectations in mind, the following questions were asked:

1. Have trainees in group one maintained a higher level of differentiating behavior while under stress in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than former trainees in group two?
2. Have trainees in group one maintained a lower level of attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than former trainees in group two?
3. Have trainees in group one initiated the following contacts for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling, or defining a self more frequently than former trainees in group two?
 - a. letter writing
 - b. telephone calls
 - c. planned visits
4. Have trainees in group one initiated the following strategies for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling, or defining a self more frequently than members of group two?
 - a. use of humor
 - b. use of reversals
 - c. use of 'I' position

- d. issue dealing
 - e. use of depersonalized examples
5. Have members of group one been more satisfied than members of group two in relating to particular family members?
 6. Have members of group one been less emotionally cut off than members of group two?
 7. Have members of group one been more differentiated than members of group two?
 8. Have members of group one been more advanced in their phase of coaching than members of group two?

Subjects

Dr. Bowen and members of the Georgetown Training Committee granted permission to this author to measure and evaluate data collected from the members of the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy. (Appendix A)

There were twenty-seven members in the 1976 class. Two members chose not to participate in the study, and another three completed all but the final questionnaire, leaving a total of twenty-two participants who made up the final count: nineteen participants in group one, as two year trainees; and five in group two, as one year trainees. All were mental health professionals. Thirteen were practicing family therapists; four were members of college/university faculties; four were Ph.D. candidates, and one was a psychiatrist.

The Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy was a new program offered by the Center. It was begun in 1975 to accommodate those who lived at a distance from Washington. The course met for three days, four times a year, and was attended by professional adults in the mental health field from all parts of the country.

The training program introduced participants to the theoretical concepts of Bowen Systems Theory, and to the importance of reconnecting with one's own family of origin. This reconnecting process included establishing person to person contact with extended family members, collecting of facts on the multigenerational system, and identifying patterns and processes within the family system. Beyond that, participants were taught to observe the part they played in their family triangles, fusions, cut offs, patterns and processes, and were coached in ways to relate to members of the family to increase differentiating ability. The second year of training, over which time period this study took place, was an outgrowth of work begun in the first year.

There has been a general enthusiasm for the design of this program. "It is one of the more exciting innovations in training at Georgetown because of the ability of trainees to learn theory and therapy with relatively infrequent direct contact from Georgetown. Participants were assigned to a supervisor with whom they consulted by mail, videotape or otherwise through

the year as well as during the session."¹ Trainees' monthly contact with their supervisor paralleled in therapeutic design clients' monthly contact with their "coach," a Bowen derivative for the word therapist.

Procedure

Data Collection

This study began at the end of the first year of training. Participants were notified of it by Dr. Bowen in May 1977 (Appendix A). Those who voluntarily selected participation were asked to complete two questionnaires. The first questionnaire, *Defining a Self in One's Family* (Appendix B), administered in June 1977, was given once. It collected multigenerational demographic information, estimate of participants' levels of differentiation with particular family members both in 1972 and in present time, and the personal significance of the first year of extended family research. The second questionnaire (Appendix C), also a self-report, was administered in November 1977 and April 1978. This questionnaire focused on participants' currently estimated levels of differentiation with particular family members; their response patterns under stress; their detriangling contacts by letter, telephone, or visits; their detriangling strategies with particular family members during the three months prior to the completion

¹ 1977 Georgetown Family Center brochure.

of each questionnaire; their level of satisfaction and emotional cut off. At the culmination of this ten month study, each participant responded in written form to questions relating to the significance of their family research.

Sixteen of the twenty-two participants were tape-interviewed at the end of the study. Those interviewed were asked to explain changes and non-changes to their responses over time. Most participants expanded upon the significance of their family of origin research, their learnings, disappointments, and the factors that "got in the way" of their work. Many of these fascinating interviews explained and amplified the process of change (or movement toward change) as seen through individual eyes.

The present study has relied on self-report data on defining a self in one's family. In order to control for researcher bias and interview demand characteristics (concerns in this type of study), the following steps were taken:

- a. Participants were asked to give answers as accurately as possible; whenever in doubt, to give their best estimate.
- b. Participants' answers to closed questions were transcribed for coding purposes by a June 1978 psychology cum laude graduate of the University of Massachusetts and an honors graduate of the Human Services Program of the University

- of Massachusetts, hired for the purpose.
- c. Participants responses to the open ended "significance of research" question were rated by a professional counselor and doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts who correlated them to the "Phases of therapy/coaching," as described by Meyer.
 - d. Participants who were interviewed were structured to time and content. Each interview was 1-1/2 hours in length and asked only explanations to the change or lack of change to questions on the November 1977 and April 1978 questionnaires. Exact quotations from these tapes were used to illustrate questionnaire responses. A complete tape was transcribed. (Appendix F)

Data Analysis

This study has compared the self-report responses in relation to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse when applicable, to three questionnaires administered in June 1977, November 1977, and April 1978. Two groups of trainees (each comprised of members of the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy, Georgetown Family Center) participated in the study. Group one, identified as "trainees", consisted of those who continued into the second year of the training program; group two, "former

"trainees constituted those who left the training program in the spring of 1977 at the end of the first year of training. The two groups were compared in the following ways:

Comparison I--Table, observations and conclusions on percentage of change in differentiating behavior in response to mother, father, spouse, and ex-spouse, by group, over time, were computed. Supportive quotations were presented. Graphs were drawn. (Appendix D)

Comparison II--Tables, observations and conclusions on percentage of change in response patterns under stress (attacking behavior, withdrawing behavior, and passive behavior), to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse by group, over time, were presented. Participants' quotations were offered in support of changed and unchanged responses. Graphs were drawn. (Appendix D)

Comparison III--Table, observations and conclusions on percentage of change in contacts made for detriangling purposes (with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse) by group, over time, were offered. An additional table was presented on the average number of contacts made for detriangling purposes by group, over time.

Comparison IV--Table, observations and conclusions on percentage of change in use of planned differentiating strategies by group, over time was presented. Participants quotes were given to substantiate the ease and difficulty in the use of particular strategies. An additional table was presented on the average

use of strategies by group, over time.

Comparison V--Tables, observations and conclusions on the percentage of change in the level of satisfaction by group, over time, were completed.

Participants' personal responses offered explanation and clarification to many of the tabulations. Conclusions were drawn; graphs drawn. (Appendix E)

Comparison VI--Tables, observations and conclusions on the percentage of change in the level of cut off over time were presented. Participants' personal responses to the process and pattern of family cut offs offered explanation.

Comparison VII--Tables, observations and conclusions on percentage of change in level of differentiation by group for each tested period were presented. The average level of differentiation in relation to mother, father, spouse, and ex-spouse for each tested period was also completed.

Comparison VIII--Tables, observations and conclusions on the average change in the phase of "coaching" by group for each tested period were offered.

C H A P T E R I V

RESULTS

The purpose of this study has been to assess change by group over time in defining a self in one's family among trainees at the Georgetown Family Center. It did so by measuring participants' responses to the defining a self process in relation to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse. Participants' responses were measured for change in the following areas:

Characteristic behavior under stress in differentiating, attacking, withdrawing and passive response patterns.

Contacts made for detriangling purposes.

Planned strategies initiated for change.

Level of satisfaction in relationship.

Level of cut off in relationship.

Level of differentiation.

Phase in coaching.

This is a hypothesis generating study rather than a hypothesis answering study. For this reason questions have been asked. For each question under consideration percentages of change by group has been reported in the narrative and in tables--group one, represented as second year trainees at the Georgetown Family Center; group two, as one year former trainees. Observations of each group have been made and conclusions drawn. Interviews were conducted at the termination of the study with members of both groups to verify responses

given on the questionnaires and to identify actual behavior those responses represented; graphs (Appendix D and E) were used.

Questions 1 and 2: Response Patterns Under Stress

A six point "Response Patterns Under Stress Scale" (Appendix C) was developed to measure change responses. Point one indicated "not at all" characteristic behavior; point six, "extremely" characteristic behavior. With any deceased person, actions were described when s/he was alive. Graphs (Appendix D) illustrated change over time in response patterns under stress with group one and group two.

Seventeen trainees made up group one; five former trainees, group two. In group one, all seventeen trainees responded to their characteristic behavior under stress with mother and father, fourteen with spouse, and six with ex-spouse. In group two, all five former trainees responded to their characteristic behavior with mother and father, four with spouse, and three with ex-spouse. Measures of characteristic behaviors were taken in November 1977 and April 1978.

Question 1: Response Patterns Under Stress:
Differentiating Behavior:

Question 1 asked: Have trainees in group one maintained a higher level of differentiating behavior while under stress in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than former trainees in group two?

For the purpose of this study differentiating behavior was described as movement toward, and/or movement away from another in relationship through the use of a calm position. As can be seen in Table 1, for group one, six trainees (35.3%) reported an increase in differentiating behavior in response to mother over time; three (17.7%) reported a decrease; eight (47.1%) reported no change. Six trainees (35.3%) reported an increase in differentiating behavior in response to father; three (17.7%), a decrease; eight (47.1%) reported no change. Five trainees (35.5%) reported an increase in response to spouse; three (21.4%) reported a decrease; six (42.6%) reported no change. Two trainees (33.3%) reported an increase in response to ex-spouse; two (33.3%) a decrease; two (33.3%) reported no change.

Table 1 also indicated that in group two, one former trainee (20.0%) reported an increase in differentiating behavior in response to mother; three (60.0%), a decrease. One (20.0%), no change. One former trainee (20.0%) reported an increase in response to father; two (40.0%), a decrease; two (40.0%) reported no change. One (25.0%) reported an increase in response to spouse; three (75.0%), a decrease. No one reported no change. One former trainee (33.3%) reported an increase in response to ex-spouse; no one, a decrease; two (66.6%) reported no change.

TABLE 1

Percentage of Change in Differentiating Behavior By Group, Over Time

	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	35.3	47.1	17.7	35.3	47.1	17.7	35.5	42.6	21.4	33.3	33.3	33.3
Group 2	20.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	40.0	40.0	25.0	0.0	75.0	33.3	66.6	0.0

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	17	5
Father	17	5
Spouse	14	4
Ex-Spouse	6	3

Observations

In group one, between 40% and 50% did not change their characteristic differentiating level in relation to mother, father and spouse. Modifications in the characteristic differentiating behavior under stress in relation to mother and to father, however, were identical. Of the subjects, 35.3% reported themselves as experiencing an increase in differentiating behavior response to each parent. Decrease with each was reported as 17.7%. Twice as many trainees reported an increase in differentiating behavior in response to mother and father as reported a decrease. The pattern of change in response to spouse was similar. Responses to ex-spouse indicated that the percentage of subjects experiencing an increase in differentiating behavior (33.3%) equalled the percentage of those experiencing no change or a decrease in characteristic pattern. Among those whose behavior changed, the overall-

group pattern was toward a more differentiating behavior in relation to mother, father and spouse.

In group two, three times as many former trainees reported their characteristic differentiating behavior in relation to mother decreased (60%) as reported it increased (20%); two times as many reported it in relation to father decreased (40%) as increased (20%); and three times as many reported it decreased (75%) as reported it increased (25%) in relation to spouse. In relation to ex-spouse most reported an unchanged behavior. Overall, a movement toward a decrease in differentiating behavior in relation to mother, father and spouse was indicated.

Conclusions

In conclusion, participants in group one who have changed have moved toward a more characteristically differentiating behavior in response to mother, father and spouse over time while participants in group two who have changed moved toward a characteristically less differentiated behavior in response to mother, father and spouse, and particularly so to spouse.

The increase in differentiating behavior in group one was explained by one trainee as a loss in negative feeling, particularly toward mother, resulting from getting to know more family members, understanding relationship patterns between family members and seeing others, particularly mother, from a different view. Asked how negative feelings were lost, the trainee responded:

I think through getting to know more members of the family in particular, and taking a look at her side of the family for several generations and understanding her relationship with her half sisters, thinking in terms of her relationship with her own mother and their younger brother who died, and hearing about her from my aunt and from her son, my cousin. They have a different view of my mother than I had. Just looking at her position in the family, and somehow she was very tied in with her own mother and that kind of relationship; that got projected down. The feelings are just gone. Just the greatest accomplishment to me. I can't say how it's done, other than the study of the family. I feel much more comfortable.

A decrease in differentiating behavior was explained by a member of group two as an "increase in awareness" of the family system that led to a realization of entrenched family patterns, and a need, still, to know more about the family.

I just think the more work you do on your family, the more aware you are of the negative forces, or just what the patterns are, or how entrenched the patterns are. . . I just need to know more.

A new awareness of the negative forces and entrenched family patterns was a valid explanation for decrease in differentiating behavior measured in group two. Kerr (1974b) explained that increased awareness, as noted above, followed the "Everything's fine" stage where formerly lack of awareness covered up knowledge of systems forces. Meyer characterized this new awareness as a depressed stage* which lasts until the individual has moved into the detriangling or change stage. The above rationale were offered as possible explanations for the decrease in differentiating response characterized by group two.

*From live supervision session, Georgetown Family Center, Patricia Meyer, Supervisor, June 1978.

Question 2: Response Patterns Under Stress--
Attacking, Withdrawing and Passive Behaviors

Question 2 asked: Have trainees in group one maintained a lower level of attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior while under stress in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse than former trainees in group two?

Responses to attacking behavior (a) below, were considered first. Responses to withdrawing behavior (b) and passive behavior (c) were considered next (p. 56).

(a) Attacking Behavior. In this study attacking behavior has been described as movement toward another through anger and intimidation. As seen in table 2, for group one, in relation to mother, three (17.6%) reported an increased aggressiveness; five (29.4%) reported a decreased aggressiveness. Nine (52.9%) reported no change. In relation to father, seven (41.0%) reported themselves as more attacking; and two (11.8%) as less attacking. Eight (47.2%) reported no change. In relation to spouse, three (21.4%) reported themselves as more attacking, and seven (50.0%) as less attacking. Four (28.5%) reported no change. With ex-spouse, two (33.3%) reported themselves as more attacking; four (66.6%) reported themselves as less attacking. No one reported self as unchanged.

Table 2 revealed that in group two, with mother, two (40.0%) reported themselves as more attacking, and one (20.0%) reported self as less attacking. Two participants (40.0%) reported no change. With father, three (60.0%) reported no change. With spouse, one (25.0%) reported self as more attacking; one (25.0%) as less attacking; two (50.0%) reported no change. With ex-spouse,

no one reported self as more attacking; two (66.6%) as less attacking; one (33.3%) reported self as no change.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Change in Attacking Behavior by Group, Over Time

	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	17.6	52.9	29.4	41.0	47.2	11.8	21.4	28.5	50.0	33.3	0	66.6
Group 2	40.0	40.0	20.0	60.0	40.0	0	25.0	50.0	25.0	0	33.3	66.6

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	17	5
Father	17	5
Spouse	14	4
Ex-Spouse	6	3

Observations

Table 2 showed that half the participants in group one did not change their attacking behavior in response to mother, but those who did change became less (29.4%) rather than more (17.6%) attacking. Nor did almost half the trainees change their attacking behavior in response to father. But conversely, those who did change generally became more (41.0%) rather than less (11.8%) attacking. A high percentage of change was indicated in the spouse relationship. Reports showed a significant decrease (50.0%) and little increase in attacking behavior directed at spouse. This was the most significant change among the patterns of response under stress behavior, with seven of

the fourteen married trainees reporting themselves as less attacking with spouse. The change in behavior with ex-spouse was of parallel movement. In this relationship, too, a considerable lessening in attacking behavior was observed.

In group two, those who reported themselves as changed with mother and with father indicated a movement toward a more attacking posture as seen in table 2. With spouse, most former trainees reported themselves as unchanged; with ex-spouse a decrease in attacking behavior was reported.

Conclusions

Several trainees in group one reported themselves as less attacking in relation to spouse and ex-spouse. Certain ones, who changed, became less attacking with mother and more attacking with father. In group two, most former trainees who changed reported themselves as more attacking in relation to mother and father, did not change in relation to spouse, and became less attacking in relation to ex-spouse.

Adding meaning to these observations, one trainee who became less attacking with mother believed that an understanding of generational relationships in the mother's family was the essential factor in decreasing attacking behavior and fostering an objective relationship. The subject reported:

One of the major things that happened to me in the program is that I don't have the anger and the rage at my mother that I did have, it just disappeared. I just can't say what happened to it, but it's gone. . . . I guess I just have a more objective view of her.

I'm glad to get a letter from her, I like to keep in touch with her, I'm concerned for her. I'm sorry I didn't do this sooner, she's 78 now and is not very well emotionally, is not as available to communicate with me. But--losing some of that angry feeling I had towards her--last year. . .

Another credited "pulling up my level of self" and the spouse's growing interest in her own family of origin research as the singular explanation for a decrease in attacking behavior.

There's been a big change in me in the last couple of months so that I'm less uptight and therefore not attacking my wife as much as I had been. And I would also tie in with this business of going home more, and also true (spouse) has become more motivated in family, and working on her family, so that there are changes in her, too. Perhaps it has something to do with my pulling up my level of self, maybe I'm attacking less because she is not upsetting me when I would attack.

Decrease in attacking behavior with ex-spouse has been explained by one trainee, long divorced, who said:

Of course the contacts with my ex-spouse are very few, but back here, November, are some things that happened with my son and my daughter. In the summer and the early fall some difficulties in the relationship: some quarrels--my son was getting upset with his father; when these things occurred I put out a great deal of effort not to get tied in and to take sides and I let the thing stay where I thought it belonged and that was with my son and his father and my daughter and her father. There was a little emotional reactivity that I felt at the time and I think that indicated fear. In April, something happened just before I went to Georgetown. I had encouraged my daughter to contact her father. She's living 30 miles from him. She has done so. My son's in service now. He is writing his father.

My ex-spouse telephoned me and asked me if I would fill out some forms verifying a back condition he had during our marriage--I agreed to fill out the forms, which I think is a differentiating move all the way around. The communication is good between the two of us. There is no emotional reactivity at the time, but I did feel when I filled out the forms, I started having some--I started falling back into a pattern of say 15-20 years ago, but I would catch myself doing it. I was aware, even of the way I was writing. It was like going back into a marriage that terminated due to many, many difficulties between the two of us, but it was finding myself reacting to the way I did at that. . . .

In group two, responses to increased attacking behavior were indefinite and unclear. One respondent simply said, "don't know. I can't explain it."

(b) Withdrawing behavior. In this study withdrawing behavior was described as movement away from others in relationship between unavailability and avoidance.

(c) Passive behavior. Passive behavior was described as no movement toward or away from others in relationship through inactivity and lack of initiative.

The responses for withdrawing and passive behavior were similar and therefore grouped together.

In group one, in relation to mother, Table 3 showed that five (29.4%) participants reported an increase in withdrawing behavior and six (35.3%) reported a decrease in withdrawal patterns. Six trainees (35.3%) reported no change. In passive behavior, six (35.3%) reported themselves as more

passive; five (31.5%) as less passive. Six (35.3%) reported no change in behavior.

In relation to father, five (29.4%) judged themselves more withdrawing; and six (35.3%) judged themselves less withdrawing. Six (35.3%) reported no change in withdrawing behavior, while in passive behavior, five (29.4%) reported themselves as more passive; and six (35.3%) reported themselves as less passive. Six (35.3%) reported no change in behavior.

With spouse, one (7.1%) reported self as more withdrawing, and four (28.5%) judged themselves less withdrawing. Nine (64.4%) reported no change. In passive behavior, three (21.4%) reported themselves as more passive, and five (35.6%) found themselves less passive. Six (42.7%) reported no change. With ex-spouse, one (16.6%) saw self as more withdrawing, and four (66.6%) saw themselves as less withdrawing. One (16.6%) saw no change. In passive behavior, one (16.6%) judged self more passive; three (49.9%) judged themselves less passive. Two (33.3%) reported no change.

In group two, in relation to mother, one (20.0%) reported self as more withdrawing; and three (60.0%) reported themselves as less withdrawing. One (20.0%) reported no change. With passive behavior, no one reported him/herself as more passive; and three (60.0%) judged themselves less passive. Two (40.0%) reported no change. In relation to father, one (20.0%) reported self as more withdrawing; one (20.0%) as less withdrawing. Three (60.0%) reported no change. In passive behavior, no one reported him/herself as

more passive; one (20.0%), as less passive. Four (80.0%) reported no change. With spouse, one (25.0%) reported self as more withdrawing; and two (50.0%) as less withdrawing. One (25.0%) reported no change. In passive behavior, one (25.0%) reported self as more passive; and two (50.0%) as less passive. One (25.0%) recorded no change. With ex-spouse, one reported self as no change, one as more withdrawing, one as less withdrawing (33.3%). In passive behavior, one reported self as no change; one, more withdrawing; and one, less withdrawing (33.3%).

TABLE 3

Percentage of Change in Withdrawing and Passive Behaviors by Group,
Over Time

Withdrawing Behavior												
	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	29.4	35.3	35.3	29.4	35.3	35.3	7.1	64.4	28.5	16.6	16.6	66.6
Group 2	20.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	33.3	33.3	33.3

Passive Behavior

	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	35.3	35.3	31.5	29.4	35.3	35.3	21.4	42.7	35.6	16.6	33.3	49.9
Group 2	0	40.0	60.0	0	80.0	20.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	33.3	33.3	33.3

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	17	4
Father	17	2
Spouse	14	4
Ex-Spouse	6	3

Observations

The trend in group one in changed and unchanged responses among withdrawing and passive behaviors have been equally distributed in relation to mother and father. In relation to spouse, behavior remained unchanged, or decreased. In relation to ex-spouse withdrawing and passive behavior decreased. At the same time, group two's former trainees reported themselves as primarily less withdrawing and less passive with mother and with spouse, unchanged with father, and scattered in response to ex-spouse.

Conclusions

In conclusion, although the majority of participants reported no change in withdrawing and passive behavior, some who did alter these behaviors, observed their decrease, rather than increase. According to one:

I do not see as much withdrawing now as I did last year in some of the stands I took. Well, I see me more toward taking an "I" position sometimes in issues that come up in the (nuclear) family, and instead of getting caught up and as a result of getting caught up, withdrawing somewhat. I see me staying in there and maintaining contact which I see as moving toward differentiation.

And to another, who recognized the need for further change:

In all my relationships there's parts that I haven't been able to get past and I deal with them by passivity because I just haven't got the system clear enough, conceptualized. I don't have any of my own plans for a differentiating move clearly enough down.

There's just a lot more learning I have to do. What I do now is passivity. At least it doesn't jangle things up too much.

(A. T-A.) When in doubt, passivity?

Yeh, the psychoanalytical answer to everything!

In group two, most responses fell into the no change category with regard to withdrawing and passive behavior. One participant indicated that in order to change, more information about the father was needed.

Realizing the need to know a little more about my father, his life, his feelings about his mother, his father, I need to know a lot more about his own past.

And another former trainee spoke of the difficulty in becoming objective with one's spouse.

I don't know, as I talk, I'm aware of it, when you're talking about somebody, like my spouse, in contact with on a more day to day basis, it's hard to become objective, or evaluate, what may account for some of the differences (in behavior).

Question 3: Contacts Initiated for Detriangling Purpose

Question 3 asked: Have trainees in group one initiated the following contacts for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling or defining a self more frequently than have former trainees in group two?

- a. letter writing
- b. telephone calls
- c. planned visits

Measures were taken in November 1977 and April 1978 of living mothers, fathers and ex-spouses. Spouses were not included. In group one, fourteen trainees had living mothers; twelve, living fathers; and five, living ex-spouses. In group two, four had living mothers; two, living fathers; and three living ex-spouses. In response to question 3, table 4 indicated percentage of change by group that occurred.

In those cases where contact was made, but not for differentiating or detriangling purposes, answers were adjusted to (0). Two such cases were reported; in each case reported, contact for contact purposes only had been made. In those cases where contact was reported as initiated by the ex-spouse, and a differentiating move took place as a result of the contact, answers were included in the study. Four such cases were reported.

In group 1 with MOTHER, as indicated by table 4, five trainees (35.5%) increased the number of written letters; three (21.3%) the number of telephone calls; four (28.5%) the number of visits over time with mother. Four (28.5%) decreased the number of letters; nine (64.0%) decreased the number of telephone calls; and four (28.5%) decreased the number of visits over time. Five (35.5%) made no change in number of letters; two (14.2%) in number of telephone calls; and six (42.6%) in number of visits over time. With FATHER, four trainees (33.3%) increased the number of written letters; seven (58.1%), the number of telephone calls; and four (33.3%), the number of visits over time. Two (16.6%) decreased the number of letters; four (33.2%), the number of telephone calls; and two (16.6%), the number of visits, over time. Six (50.0%) made no change in the number of letters; one (8.3%), in the number of telephone calls; and six (50.0%), in the number of visits over time. With EX-SPOUSE, three trainees (60.0%) increased the number of written letters; one (20.0%), the number of telephone calls; and one (20.0%), the number of visits over time. One (20.0%) decreased the number of letters; three (60.0%), the number of telephone calls. No one (0.0%) decreased the number of visits, over time. One (20.0%) made no change in number of letters; one (20.0%), in number of telephone calls; and four (80.0%), in number of visits over time.

In group 2 with MOTHER, (table 4), one (25.0%) participant increased number of written letters; two (50.0%), the number of telephone calls; one (25.0%) the number of visits over time. One (25.0%) decreased the number of letters; no one decreased the number of telephone calls or the number of visits over time. Two (50.0%) made no change in the number of letters; two (50.0%), in the number of telephone calls; and three (75.0%), in the number of visits over time. With FATHER, one participant (50.0%) increased the number of written letters; one (50.0%), the number of telephone calls; and no one (0.0%) the number of visits over time. No one decreased the number of letters, telephone calls, or visits over time. One (50.0%) made no change in the number of letters; one (50.0%), in the number of telephone calls; and two (100.0%) in the number of visits over time. With EX-SPOUSE, one (33.3%) increased the number of written letters; one (33.3%), the number of telephone calls; and no one (0.0%), the number of visits over time. No one decreased the number of letters; one (33.3%) decreased the number of telephone calls; and one (33.3%), the number of visits over time. Two (66.6%) made no change in the number of letters; one (33.3%), in the number of telephone calls; and two (66.6%), in the number of visits.

TABLE 4

Percentage of Change in Contacts for Detriangling Purposes by Group, Over Time

<u>Letters</u>									
	Mother			Father			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	35.5	35.5	28.5	33.3	50.0	16.6	60.0	20.0	20.0
Group 2	25.0	50.0	25.0	50.0	50.0	0	33.3	66.6	0.0
<u>Telephone Calls</u>									
	Mother			Father			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	21.3	14.2	64.0	58.1	8.3	33.2	20.0	20.0	60.0
Group 2	50.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3
<u>Visits</u>									
	Mother			Father			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	23.5	42.6	28.5	33.2	50.0	16.6	20.0	50.0	0.0
Group 2	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	66.6	33.3

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	14	4
Father	12	2
Ex-Spouse	5	3

Observations

In group one, of the trainees who changed, as seen in table 4, more increased than decreased their detriangling contacts over time with mother and father through letters and visits. A sizeable percentage remained unchanged. Telephone contact increased with father but decreased with mother. This change supported an already identified trend seen in a movement toward father. A high percentage remained unchanged in visit contact with ex-spouse, but the average contact over time increased. Letter contact with ex-spouse increased while telephone contact decreased. Table 5 generally supported these trends and indicated the average number of contacts made in the November 1977 measure as compared to the April 1978 measure. Increases were not dramatic but gave a sense of number of contacts involved over the period of the study.

In group two, of the trainees who changed, as seen in table 4, more increased than decreased their detriangling contacts over time with mother and father through telephone calls. An equal percentage remained unchanged. Letter contact increased with father. A high percentage remained unchanged in visit contact with ex-spouse in this group also, and the average contact over time decreased. Table 5 generally supported these trends and indicated the average number of contacts made for each measure of the study. Increases in number of contacts were noticeable in telephone contact. Overall, there were fewer contacts with mother, father and ex-spouse in group two than in group one.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a greater percentage of change in contact for de-triangling purposes occurred in group one than in group two and the average number of contacts made with mother, father and ex-spouse were greater for group one participants than for group two participants.

TABLE 5

Average Number of Contacts by Group, Over Time

<u>LETTERS</u>						
	Mother		Father		Ex-Spouse	
	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	2.07	2.07	1.25	1.75	1.20	1.40
Group 2	.25	.50	.00	1.00	.00	.33
<u>TELEPHONE CALLS</u>						
	Mother		Father		Ex-Spouse	
	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	4.00	3.57	2.25	2.66	4.80	1.80
Group 2	1.00	4.50	1.00	3.00	1.00	.66
<u>VISITS</u>						
	Mother		Father		Ex-Spouse	
	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	2.35	2.92	1.91	2.50	.20	.80
Group 2	.25	.50	.00	.00	.66	.33

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	14	4
Father	12	2
Ex-Spouse	5	3

Question 4: Planned Strategies Initiated for Change

Question 4 asked: Have trainees in group one initiated the following strategies for the purpose of differentiating, detriangling or defining a self more frequently than members of group two?

- a. use of humor
- b. use of reversals
- c. use of "I" position
- d. issue dealing
- e. use of depersonalized examples

Responses were made to the above question in November 1977 and April 1978. To measure participant response, a six point Planned Strategies for Change Scale was used (Appendix C). Point one on the scale indicated a "not at all typical" use of the strategy and point six, an "extremely typical" use. From the total group of seventeen trainees in group one, fourteen participants had living mothers; twelve, living fathers; fourteen, spouses; and five, living ex-spouses. From the total group of five former trainees in group two, four participants had living mothers; two living fathers; four, spouses; and three, ex-spouses. In the following section the percentage of increase, decrease and unchanged use of each strategy over time with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse was assessed.

In group 1 with MOTHER (table 6) three trainees (21.4%) increased, four (28.5%) were unchanged, and seven (49.7%) decreased in their use of

humor with mother over time. Three (21.4%) increased, six (42.6%) were unchanged, and five (35.5%) decreased in their use of reversals. Five (35.7%) increased, two (14.2%) were unchanged and seven (50.0%) decreased in their use of the "I" position. Six (42.7%) increased, three (21.4%) were unchanged, and five (35.5%) decreased in their use of issue dealing. Four (28.5%) increased, five (35.5%) were unchanged, and five (35.5%) decreased in their use of depersonalized examples.

With FATHER, table 6, four (33.2%) increased, three (25.0%) remained unchanged, and five (41.5%) decreased in their use of humor with father over time. Two (16.6%) increased, five (41.5%) remained unchanged, and five (41.5%) decreased in the use of reversals. Two (16.6%) increased, three (25.0%) remained unchanged, and seven (58.1%) decreased in the use of the "I" position. Four (33.2%) increased, six (50.0%) remained unchanged, and two (16.6%) decreased in the use of issue dealing. Three (25.0%) increased, four (33.2%) remained unchanged, and five (41.5%) decreased in the use of depersonalized examples.

With SPOUSE, table 6, seven trainees (50.0%) increased, four (28.5%) remained unchanged, and three (21.4%) decreased in their use of humor with spouse over time. Seven (50.0%) increased, four (28.5%) remained unchanged, and three (21.4%) decreased in the use of reversals. Three (21.4%) increased, eight (56.8%) remained unchanged, and three (21.4%) decreased in the use of "I" position. Two (14.2%) increased, five (35.5%) remained unchanged, and seven (50.0%) decreased in the use of

issue dealing. Four (28.5%) increased, eight (56.8%) remained unchanged, and two (14.2%) decreased in the use of depersonalized examples.

With EX-SPOUSE, table 6, two trainees (40.0%) increased, three (60.0%) remained unchanged, and no one decreased in the use of humor with ex-spouse over time. No one increased, three (60.0%) remained unchanged, and two (40.0%) decreased in the use of reversals. Two (40.0%) increased, two (40.0%) remained unchanged, and one (20.0%) decreased in the use of "I" position. Two (40.0%) increased, three (60.0%) remained unchanged, and no one decreased in the use of issue dealing. One (20.0%) increased, three (60.0%) remained unchanged, and one (20.0%) decreased in the use of depersonalized examples.

In group 2 with MOTHER, table 6, one former trainee (25.0%) increased; one (25.0%) was unchanged; and two (50.0%) decreased in their use of humor with mother. All participants remained unchanged in the use of reversals. One (25.0%) increased and one (25.0%) was unchanged in use of the "I" position; two (50.0%) decreased. No one increased, and one (25.0%) remained unchanged in the use of issue dealing; three (75.0%) decreased. No one increased, two (50.0%) remained unchanged and two (50.0%) decreased in use of depersonalized example.

With FATHER, table 6, no former trainees increased or decreased; all (100.0%) remained unchanged in the use of humor, reversals, and depersonalized examples over time. No one increased use of "I" position or issue dealing; one (50.0%) remained unchanged in the use of "I" position; one

(50.0%) decreased "I" position; and two (100.0%) decreased issue dealing.

With SPOUSE, table 6, one former trainee (25.0%) increased; no one (0.0%) remained unchanged; three (75.0%) decreased in the use of humor with spouse over time. No one increased; two (50.0%) remained unchanged; and two (50.0%) decreased in the use of reversals. Two (50.0%) increased; one (25.0%) remained unchanged; and one (25.0%) decreased in the use of "I" position. Four (100.0%) remained unchanged in the use of issue dealing. No one increased; two (50.0%) remained the same; and two (50.0%) decreased in the use of depersonalized examples.

With EX-SPOUSE, table 6, one (33.3%) increased; two (66.6%) remained unchanged and no one decreased in the use of either humor or reversals. All participants maintained the same use of "I" position. Two (66.6%) increased; one (33.3%) remained unchanged; and no one decreased in the use of issue dealing. One (33.3%) increased, remained unchanged, and decreased in the use of depersonalized examples.

The number of participants included in table 6 were as follows:

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	14	4
Father	12	2
Spouse	14	4
Ex-Spouse	5	3

TABLE 6

Percentage of Change in Use of Planned Strategies by Group, Over Time*

	USE OF HUMOR											
	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	21.4	28.5	49.7	33.2	25.0	41.5	50.0	28.5	21.4	40.0	60.0	0.0
Group 2	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	75.0	33.3	66.6	0.0
USE OF REVERSALS												
Group 1	21.4	42.6	35.5	16.6	41.5	41.5	50.0	28.5	21.4	0.0	60.0	40.0
Group 2	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	33.3	66.6	0.0
USE OF "I" POSITION												
Group 1	35.7	14.2	50.0	16.6	25.0	58.1	21.4	56.8	21.4	40.0	40.0	20.0
Group 2	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
USE OF ISSUE DEALING												
Group 1	42.7	21.4	35.5	33.2	50.0	16.6	14.2	35.5	50.0	40.0	60.0	0.0
Group 2	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	66.6	33.3	0.0
USE OF DEPERSONALIZED EXAMPLES												
Group 1	28.5	35.5	35.5	25.0	33.2	41.5	28.5	56.8	14.2	20.0	60.0	20.0
Group 2	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	33.3	33.3	33.3

72

* Percentages will not always equal 100 because of rounding error.

Observations

Group one participants expressed, in some cases, a reduced anxiety in the use of strategies; in other cases, a still present anxiety; and in still others, a need for distinction in their use. Excerpts from taped interviews, conducted at the conclusion of this study, gave integrity to the meaning applied to changed and unchanged responses found in the previous table 6.

In group one, table 6 indicated an increase in the use of humor with spouse and ex-spouse, an increase in the use of reversals with spouse, the use of "I" position with ex-spouse and the use of issue dealing with mother and ex-spouse.

On trainee commented on the effects of more frequent use of humor in the spouse relationship:

Things seem to have gotten a lot less serious;
it's a lot lighter. Just a real big change there.

I think part of it is that I stopped being distancing
and I got warmer and closer at the same time I
became more differentiated. I just didn't get into
hassels.

All change was not of an increase in nature. Some, instead, decreased their use of strategies. That occurred in the use of humor and "I" position with mother and father, use of issue dealing with spouse, and use of de-personalized examples with father. A trainee cautioned against abuses of the "I" position, noting a distinction in the way it was used:

There's a distinction. There are people who use their "I" position to beat other people on the head with. "This is my 'I' position and like it or lump it, kind of thing." Then there's a calmer statement, I don't know if back here (November) if what I was calling an "I" position, was in fact, an "I" position. It generated too much reactivity in him (spouse) for it to be. Now I have been more able to say something without hooks. Here (November) there is a "Here's what I'm about." The unspoken is "React to it. I dare you." Here (April), I think, I've been saying, "This is what I think. Period. End of it. React if you want, don't react. This is what I am about." I think an "I" position should be so second nature, you can ho-hum it. There's not the emotional need to sell it to the world.

A significant percentage of the participants in group one made no change in the use of strategies over time. With ex-spouse this was particularly so. This was also evident in the use of the "I" position with spouse, issue dealing with father and depersonalized examples with spouse. Commenting on the anxiety still present in the use of certain strategies, particularly the use of reversals with mother and father, one member said:

That's just something (reversals) that I'm afraid would be terribly confusing to her (mother). I guess I'm just not comfortable. It's my understanding that for a reversal to work well that you need to be pretty much uninvested in the outcome, It's still kind of scary for me.

And another responded:

What scares the living daylight out of me is a reversal. I am far away from the point where I can make a cool, calm reversal and kind of allow results to happen. I'm not there yet. I got to get easier about it.

Some did make important use of strategies that brought ease to previously uneasy relationships. One participant who had become comfortable in the use

of humor at times of emotional intensity, offered this explanation of her effort:

I've tried to use humor with my mother which I've never done before and she's responded differently when I've kidded her. It's been a really nice feeling; a closeness that I haven't had before. It's been real serious (previously). . . .

(A.T-A.) What has it done for you, this humor with your parents?

I don't feel as anxious. I can go (visit) with a light touch, just kind of go and be relatively low key. I feel more comfortable with it. I'm trying to stay low key. My parents have a great sense of humor but we've never used it in a light way about heavy emotional issues.

In group two, participants increased their use of the "I" position with spouse and use of issue dealing with ex-spouse. One described an increase in the use of the "I" position, as the result of becoming more objective about self. It happens by,

Getting a little more objectivity and thinking, when I can get objective, of what my part in something is, one way or another, stating what I want and what's important to me.

When queried about an increased use of issue dealing with ex-spouse, the former trainee explained the process this way:

I think I worked consciously on saying subjective thoughts out loud around my current spouse and getting--when I talk to my ex-spouse--being as objective as I can. Taking the emotionally charged stuff out of it when I talk. . . directly. It's almost what Bowen talks about--planning or rehearsing your strategy. I suppose one way is to verbalize it so somebody else--your feelings one way or another and from that decide what you really want to say to the other person.

But all change was not in a positive direction. Several responses were reported as decreased and not always described in clear terms. When asked to explain the decrease in use of humor with mother or spouse a group two member stated simply, "I don't know. I simply can't remember." Use of "I" position also decreased with mother and so too did issue dealing with mother and father. The majority of responses in group two were reported as unchanged. In observing table 6, the clear trend in group two was toward an unchanged use of strategies over time, followed by a decreased use of them. Only in isolated cases was an increase in use evident.

The following table (7) indicated the average use of strategies as reported during the November 1977 and April 1978 measurements. In group one, trainees increased their use of humor with spouse and ex-spouse, use of reversals with spouse, "I" position with spouse and ex-spouse, issue dealing with mother, father and ex-spouse, use of depersonalized examples with spouse and ex-spouse. The overall increase in the use of strategies was evident in the spouse and ex-spouse relationships, most prevalently on the "somewhat typically" used level. Use of strategies with mother and father decreased over time but were still used on the "somewhat typically" used level.

In group two, former trainees increased the use of four out of five strategies with ex-spouse, most prevalently on the "somewhat typically" used level. All other responses were reported as either decreased or unchanged and then, except for isolated cases, on the "not very typically" used level.

TABLE 7

Average Use of Planned Strategies, By Group, Over Time

77

	Mother		<u>Use of Humor</u>		Spouse		Ex-Spouse	
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	4.28	3.92	4.00	3.83	3.85	4.35	2.80	3.20
Group 2	3.00	2.50	1.50	1.50	3.75	3.00	3.00	3.33
			<u>Use of Reversals</u>					
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	3.28	3.00	2.66	2.16	3.07	3.28	3.60	2.80
Group 2	2.50	2.50	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.50	4.00	4.33
			<u>Use of "I" Position</u>					
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	3.92	3.57	3.91	3.33	4.57	4.64	3.80	4.60
Group 2	4.75	3.75	5.00	4.00	4.75	4.25	3.66	3.66
			<u>Use of Issue Dealing</u>					
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	3.50	3.71	2.91	3.08	4.71	4.07	4.40	4.80
Group 2	4.00	2.50	4.00	2.50	5.50	5.50	3.33	4.00
			<u>Use of Depersonalized Examples</u>					
	N	A	N	A	N	A	N	A
Group 1	2.35	2.28	2.16	2.08	2.57	2.78	4.20	4.40
Group 2	2.25	1.25	2.50	2.50	2.50	1.50	1.33	2.00
					<u>Use of Strategy Scale :</u>			
					1-2 strategy "not at all" typically used			
					3-4 strategy "somewhat" typically used			
					5-6 strategy "extremely" typically used			

Conclusions

In conclusion, trainees generally became more competent in the use of strategies "somewhat typically" with spouse and ex-spouse; former trainees with ex-spouse. Except for the use of issue dealing, trainees decreased their use of strategies with mother and father but still continued to use them on the "somewhat typically" level. Former trainees decreased, or did not change, their use of strategies with mother, father and spouse and in most cases employed strategies "not at all typically."

Question 5 asked: Have members of group one been more satisfied than members of group two in relating to particular family members?

Table 8 indicated that among group one participants, five trainees (35.7%) became more satisfied in their relationship with mother overtime; five (35.7%) did not change their level of satisfaction, and four (28.6%) became less satisfied. With father, four (33.3%) became more satisfied; six (50.0%) did not change; and two (16.7%) became less satisfied. With spouse, two (14.3%) were more satisfied; ten (71.4%) made no change and two (14.3%) were less satisfied. With ex-spouse, three (60.0%) were more satisfied; one (20.0%) did not change and one (20.0%) was less satisfied.

Among group two participants (table 8) one (25.0%) became more satisfied in relationship with mother; one (25.0%) did not change; and two (50.0%) became less satisfied. With father, two (100.0%) became less satisfied. With spouse, one (25.0%) became more satisfied; three (75.0%) did not change. With ex-spouse, no one became more satisfied; one (33.3%) did not change; and two (66.7%) were less satisfied.

TABLE 8

Percentage of Change in Level of Satisfaction By Group, Over Time

	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	35.7	35.7	28.6	33.3	50.0	16.7	14.3	71.4	14.3	60.0	20.0	20.0
Group 2	25.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	14	4
Father	12	2
Spouse	14	4
Ex-Spouse	5	3

Observations

It seems evident, as observed in table 8 that in group one, trainees became more satisfied in their relationships with their mothers (35.7%) as well as their fathers (33.3%), and much more satisfied in their relationships with their ex-spouses (60.0%). Their level of satisfaction with their spouses changed the least and were already at a rather high level of satisfaction (Appendix E). Most relationships did not become less satisfactory over time.

As table 8 indicated, in group two, no one became more satisfied in his/her relationship with the father or ex-spouse. Some became more satisfied with their mother and spouse, but only moderately so (25.0% each).

Their level of satisfaction with their spouse changed the least (75.0%), then too this was at an already high level of satisfaction (Appendix E). All other relationships became less satisfactory over time.

Participants Responses to Level of Satisfaction

Participants in the study have openly and candidly talked on tape interviews about the quality of their level of satisfaction in response to mother, father, spouse, and ex-spouse. Within group one, this quality of satisfaction often reflected a new level of awareness concerning each relationship, an awareness that had become more acutely defined throughout the course of the study. Within the newly defined awareness, a deepening realization of the life-time quality of defining a self within a family system took place. For some who had already achieved a clear and well defined view of a particular relationship, responses reflected an opening up of and flexibility within the relationship, a lessening of tension, and a fine sense of acceptance based on knowledge, contact, and a thinking response to long established family interactional patterns.

Throughout the following responses, two themes emerged. The first, has been called an "awakening" theme. Within the first theme, subjects have already established contact with family members and were frequently filled with the hope, diligence and zeal of novice workers. As they worked within the system, gaining some objectivity and awareness, the realization of the depth and breadth of the tasks before them began to take shape, and the realism involved in the continuing work ahead, took form.

The second theme has been called the "realism" theme. Within this second theme, subjects have made some realistic effort with a correspondingly increased sense of satisfaction. Some aspects and patterns of functioning in the relationship were clearly defined and the actual work of detriangling took place. During this period, subjects accomplished some solid change in relationships, resulting in an increased satisfaction over time.

The following responses fell into the "awakening" theme. They demonstrated new awareness and a recognition of continued work ahead. For one subject, that new awareness came when she realized that not the number, but rather the quality of contacts within the relationship was truly significant:

In November, I was equating satisfaction with the behavioral part of calling the woman (mother) and having a relationship with her that I have consistently avoided. Before I never called her. She would not call me. I was satisfied with the amount of work, the number of contact. I think this (April) is more indicative of satisfaction with the relationship. This (November) is more indicative of my satisfaction with contact with my mother.

In response to a decrease in satisfaction because of a new found awareness this respondent said,

I can explain that real easily, I think its a function of becoming more aware of how much work I have to do and being unsatisfied with where I am right now. The more you hang in this sort of effort, the more you realized what needs to be done, so how can you get satisfied.

A fluctuation between negativity and hopefulness characterized the following response:

I just get to feeling pretty hopeless about her negativity; other times I feel more optimistic. Not so much that she's got to change but I've got to figure out some ways not to be overcome by it.

One, who normally withdrew from interaction, saw a new involvement certainly not conflict free but more satisfying.

There's still conflict, but I get more satisfaction out of the conflict than I do out of the withdrawing. At least there's interaction and contact and I see that as progress. I really do not think much progress comes for me in withdrawing. There has to be a more active voice in this.

It's the realization that there's more to be done than I had realized before. Just feeling the need for a closer relationship, it's more evident and more apparent now.

I think it could even be much greater but it's not there right now.

(A.T-A.) What's it going to take to make it much greater?

More effort. More effort on my part, but I can't even address that right now. Have you got three hours?

There was a lot of emotional heat the last time I was out there, but it sure wasn't like it used to be and afterward I could come back and figure out what it was. I'm a lot more realistic about what's going on, but I can handle those things. 80% now means acceptance of a lot more pain than it did before but I'm ok with that.

The following responses fell into the "realism" theme. They spoke of a realistic effort made successful. One trainee gave an amazing account of a chronic pattern that had taken a humorous turn for the better.

The difference in the mother--between my going home more, more emotional issues coming up between April and November, and my being able to get a handle on them--I think I am dealing with my mother, staying close and dealing with issues. The typical way for me would be to distance.

To explain that process of staying close and dealing with issues, the trainee referred to an incident that occurred in a restaurant with his mother.

My mother would tell the waitress what kind of soup I wanted. Talk about fusion! That's a good example of it! Even on issues like that I'm less reactive. Before my response would be to get angry and blow up, and now I'm more able to make funny comments to the waitress. "She'll tell you what my entree will be, too!"

For certain participants, realistic effort resulted in genuine satisfaction. For some, that realistic effort brought satisfaction in the ex-spouse relationship. For those who made headway in that relationship, some thoughts were offered:

You know, it's really gotten better. We're working on more things together--I think that's helped my relationship with my children, the fact that I've gotten a better relationship with my ex-spouse.

Of course that's a distant relationship. I don't think I was that differentiated last fall, but maybe I probably was--I was able to deal with those contacts with ex-spouse without a great deal of reactivity, which had been the pattern in my life for years.

For other participants, that "realistic" effort resulting in satisfaction was described in more general terms. In relation to their wives, two trainees said:

Just relating in a different way, feeling more comfortable and less anxious around her.

I'm more ready to allow her to have whatever response she wants to have.

The tendency in group two was to speak of satisfaction in nuclear family terms only, concentrating primarily on the marital twosome. These same respondents were not able to speak of satisfaction positively in relation to parents. Satisfaction here was only with the twosome.

We've had a pitch of intense interaction that was enforced because there was all these things to do and by the time I filled that and I was beginning to reap the fruits of all that activity--We've started making contacts. with old friends--and that's given us a sense of ourselves.

Yeh. That's it--totally satisfied. I think it means contact every day by phone or at home, preferably more than once a day--Making time particularly in the evening--Having that opportunity to make contact, sharing about how things are with each one, what you are going through, what the difficulties/issues have been. I think as I've become a stronger person, it's allowed him to come out with his issues too. That's been a change.

One former trainee, however, did speak of a lessening in satisfaction after meeting with an ex-spouse:

I would guess that the shift downward has to do with after that longer meeting. I came away thinking there really were more things that I would have liked to have said. That would lower the satisfaction I would think.

Conclusions

Trainees in group one were slowly becoming more satisfied with mother and father, were already somewhat satisfied with spouse and were becoming much more satisfied with ex-spouse.

In group two, satisfaction was very high within the marital dyad, but not so in other relationships. Is this satisfaction level maintained at the expense of not shaking up the system? That is, was it that either the marital dyad was too shaky to attempt change in the system or, the other side of that same coin, was the marital dyad too good to risk shaking up the system? For the system was not being shaken up, as witnessed by the minimal increase in the extended family system--twenty-five per cent with mother, zero per cent with father and zero per cent with ex-spouse. Were these very facts the reason why participants in group two withdrew from the training program? Was "shaking up" the satisfaction levels of the marital relationship too great a risk for some to take?

The above explored measure has generated several questions for future research and evaluation. It concluded that increased satisfaction comes as a result of increased effort in the extended family and a maintained high level of satisfaction in the marital dyad in group one. It further concluded it came as a result of effort in the marital dyad only in group two.

Question 6: Level of Cut Off in Relationship:

Question 6 asked: Have members of group one been less emotionally cut off than members of group two?

In group one, as indicated by table 9, seven trainees (50.0%) became more cut off in their relationship with mother over time; five (35.7%) did not change their level of cut off; and two (14.3%) became less cut off. With father, six (50.0%) became more cut off; two (16.7%) did not change; and four (33.3%) became less cut off. With spouse, five (38.4%) became more cut off; four (30.8%) did not change; four (30.8%) became less cut off. With ex-spouse, no one became more cut off; two (40.0%) did not change; and three (60.0%) became less cut off.

In group two, one former trainee (25.0%) became less cut off with mother; two (50.0%) did not change; and one (25.0%) became less cut off. With father, one (50.0%) became more so; one (50.0%) did not change; and no one became less cut off. With spouse, one (25.0%) became more cut off; three (75.0%) did not change and no one became less cut off. With ex-spouse, two (66.7%) became more cut off; one (33.3%) did not change; and no one became less cut off.

TABLE 9

Percentage of Change in Level of Cut Off By Group, Over Time

	Mother			Father			Spouse			Ex-Spouse		
	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Group 1	50.0	35.7	14.3	50.0	16.7	33.3	38.4	30.8	30.8	0.0	40.0	60.0
Group 2	25.0	50.0	25.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0

N =	Group 1	Group 2
Mother	14	4
Father	12	2
Spouse	13	4
Ex-Spouse	5	3

Personal Responses to Level of Cut Off

In searching for a theme which explained the change in cut offs over time, as recognized in the previous table, one somewhat muted, yet discernable theme emerged from participant interviews. That theme was one of startled recognition, or new-found awareness, in relation to cut offs existent in the system, and offered one explanation to the increase in cut off with mother and father among group one participants. One trainee for whom this recognition was a new experience said:

The most important thing is recognizing that so much is set up for you by the family you grew up in. It got me to thinking about how much am I really my own person and how much am I just kind of following a blueprint. That's there for me, set up by my family in relation to cut offs. That cut offs are a way of dealing with people in my family on both sides-- my mother and my father's side.

Other trainees, focusing on cut offs in relation to mother and referring to an increase in cut offs over time, explained them this way:

You've come a long way but you've got a long way to go. You're not as differentiated as you thought you were-- It (November response) might have been a temporary high I was feeling because of some of the work I was able to do back then. . . Now more realistic evaluations.

Another, referring to a visit with mother responded:

Well, it was just after the visit and at that time I felt a lot more cut off. There was a lot of reaction to it. She really came down. She did her full deal . . . I got pushed a little far. . . she laid a lot of evaluations in her typical way. . . so there was a cut off I'm working to get past.

In response to increase in cut off with father, some trainees said:

My dad has the ability to close you out and go on his way; something I felt very strongly as a child.

I think that (measurement) represents the sheer frustration at the showness of relationship establishment. My thinking was that you go to somebody who's on the brink of death and bare your soul and that should somehow result in immediate good relationship. And when that didn't happen, when it took longer than I thought it would take, I was feeling cut off, frustrated, whatever.

I haven't felt very much in contact with my dad recently. . . I've been putting more energy into the mother thing.

With spouse the responses varied:

We were doing a lot of mutual attack kind of stuff (November). There was a lot of distancing (in April), some backing off; not differentiation, but real distancing and avoidance.

I don't know whether there was a little denial in November. Things are a lot better now. I'm not sure I can account for that.

There are times, yes, there are times when I feel it (cut off). I think this is maybe part of any close relationship. I am sure there are times he feels it too.

When I withdraw, I do it to plot strategy to un-withdraw or figure out, analyze what I am doing wrong.

I'm not cut off from my spouse; we're fused. I'm certainly not cut off!

With ex-spouse there was reflected a need to maintain little contact, explained as a rational cut off:

I'm looking at that relationship as being hopefully, less emotional. There's very little contact. If there were more contact, it would be different. There would be emotional cut offs because during the marriage this person had a way of maintaining his own feeling of security about doing emotional cut offs. It was part of a whole pattern.

I don't look at it as an emotional cut off. I look at it as a rational cut off.

In group two, increased cut off with parents was described by one former trainee as having occurred during a family crisis.

I think I saw more clearly my own position in my family, my father counting on me to be the family consultant which I tried to let him know I didn't want to be because I've always been in that position with him. I had a chance to see where I stood with my younger siblings and I had a chance to see where they stood too, how they felt in relation to the family, to my parents. I saw more of the hurt during the crisis and what a privileged spot I was seen to be in

because of my being the eldest and my having an "in" with my father. On the other hand, I saw the others had a closer tie with my mother which I didn't feel I had. So it was a good time for me just to see the family constellation.

Another former trainee with an unchanged relationship vis-a-vis cut offs said flatly, "There are certain areas of my life I don't share with my mother or my ex-spouse. They're probably areas that would be triggers to either one of us, that would be "hot" issues and I think raising them with either one of those people wouldn't make sense."

In relation to spouse, one former trainee defined the cut off as a protective thing:

It's probably a positive thing (cut off). I don't know. It probably means I can turn off when I want to, without getting over involved. Well, I have a capacity to remove myself. I think it is a protective thing. I think it's a way of not dealing with (spouse) anxiety-- It's what I do sometimes to cut off. I just don't respond. I withdraw.

Another former trainee, speaking of cut offs said:

It's pretty low with my wife. There are times when I retreat. . . I think of myself as an emotional cut off.

And about ex-spouse, two former trainees each made their particular response:

I found that, one of the most difficult questions because of my own sense that there is no emotional cut off. I would say there was more of an emotional cut off when we were living together, and married, than there is now, and its not distance that makes for the separation. It's how people relate. We're

two separate people and living two separate lives. . .
I don't see that as any residual there. I think a hell
of a lot of that occurred in the process of our
separating. It's a finished relationship.

When I leave a significant emotional contact with
somebody it's just over. I tend to do that. . .
I am something of a "cutter-offer". When I don't
want to deal with somebody any more, I just don't
deal with them. I usually hook it up to deaths,
significant deaths in the family--I think it's in the
family.

In summary, the level of cut offs in group one increased with mother
and father as a result of increased awareness and recognition vis-a-vis the
presence of cut offs in the system. In group two, overall change was less
prevalent, and maintenance of the status quo, more prevalent.

Question 7: Level of Differentiation

Question 7 asked: Have members of group one been more differentiated than members of group two?

Participants were asked to identify their level of differentiation in relation to particular family members by placing the appropriate code above their name. The code included the following four point scale:

1. fusion
2. uncomfortable fusion
3. uncomfortable differentiation
4. differentiation

The scale was developed to correspond to the four levels of differentiation as described by Bowen:*

- 0-25 Range - intense degree of ego fusion, little sense of self
- 25-50 Range - less intense degree of ego fusion, a poorly defined sense of self
- 50-75 Range - much lower degree of ego fusion, a fairly well defined sense of self, but conforming under stress
- 75-100 Range - a well defined sense of self maintained under stress, directed by beliefs and conviction

Participants responded to their level of differentiation for the following dates: five years prior to the beginning of the study (1972), June 1977, November 1977 and April 1978.

*Expanded description of these levels may be found on page 14-16.

Table 10 pointed out that in group one with MOTHER in 1972, five (29.4%) trainees reported themselves as fused; nine (53.1%), as uncomfortably fused; two (11.6%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (5.9%), as differentiated. In June 1977, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused; ten (59.0%), as uncomfortably fused; five (29.3%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and two (11.7%), as differentiated. In November 1977, one (5.9%) reported self as fused; seven (41.2%), as uncomfortably fused; eight (47.1%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (5.9%), as differentiated. In April 1978, two (11.8%) reported self as fused; four (23.5%), as uncomfortably fused; nine (53.1%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and two (11.6%), as differentiated.

With FATHER in 1972, five (29.4%) trainees reported themselves as fused; nine (53.1%), as uncomfortably fused; three (17.5%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and none (0.0%) as differentiated. In June 1977, two (11.6%) reported themselves as fused; six (35.4%), as uncomfortably fused; six (35.4%) as uncomfortably differentiated; and three (17.6%), as differentiated.

In November 1977, one (5.8%) reported self as fused; six (35.4%), as uncomfortably fused; six (35.4%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and four (23.4%), as differentiated. In April 1978, two (11.6%) reported self as fused; four (23.6%), as uncomfortably fused; eight (47.2%) as uncomfortably differentiated; and three (17.6%), as differentiated.

With SPOUSE, in 1972, four (36.4%) trainees reported themselves as fused; six (54.6%), as uncomfortably fused; one (9.0%), as uncomfortably

differentiated; no one (0.0%), as differentiated. In June 1977, four (36.4%) reported themselves as fused; two (18.1%), as uncomfortably fused; five (45.5%), as uncomfortably differentiated; no one (0.0%) as differentiated. In November 1977, three (23.1%) reported themselves as fused; five (38.4%) as uncomfortably fused; four (30.8%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (7.7%), as differentiated. In April 1978, two (16.7%) reported themselves as fused; two (16.7%), as uncomfortably fused; seven (58.3%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (8.3%), as differentiated.

With EX-SPOUSE, in 1972, five (83.3%) reported selves as fused; one (16.7%), as uncomfortably fused; and no one (0.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated or differentiated. In June 1977, one (16.7%) reported self as fused; one (16.7%) as uncomfortably fused, three (49.9%), as uncomfortably differentiated and one (16.7%) as differentiated. In November 1977, one (16.7%) reported self as fused; two (33.3%), as uncomfortably fused; two (33.3%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (16.7%), as differentiated. In April 1978, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused or uncomfortably fused; four (66.5%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and two (33.3%), as differentiated.

In group two with MOTHER, table 10 indicated that in 1972, one (20.0%) reported self as fused; two (40.0%), as uncomfortably fused; one (20.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (20.0%) as differentiated. In June 1977, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused; two (40.0%), as uncomfortably fused; two (40.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one

(20.0%), as differentiated. In November 1977, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused; one (20.0%), as uncomfortably fused; three (60.0%) as uncomfortably differentiated, and one (20.0%) as differentiated. In April 1978, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused; one (20.0%), as uncomfortably fused; three (60.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (20.0%), as differentiated.

With FATHER, in 1972, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused; three (60.0%), as uncomfortably fused; one (20.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (20.0%), as differentiated. In June 1977, November 1977 and April 1978, no one (0.0%) reported self as fused or uncomfortably fused; three (60.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and two (40.0%), as differentiated.

With SPOUSE, in 1972, two (100.0%) former trainees reported themselves as uncomfortably fused. In June 1977, two (50.0%) described themselves as fused; one (25.0%), as uncomfortably fused; no one (0.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated and one (25.0%), as differentiated. In November 1977, one (25.0%) reported as fused; two (50.0%) as uncomfortably fused; no one (0.0%), as uncomfortably differentiated; and one (25.0%), as differentiated. In April 1978 one (25.0%) each reported as fused; uncomfortably fused, uncomfortably differentiated, and differentiated.

With EX-SPOUSE, in 1972, one of the two (50.0%) reported self as fused; the other (50.0%), as differentiated. In June 1977, both (100.0%)

reported self as differentiated. In November 1977 and April 1978, three with ex-spouses reported: No one (0.0%) as fused or uncomfortably fused; one (33.3%), as uncomfortably differentiated, and two (66.7%), as differentiated.

Observations

As table 10 indicated in group one, there was an overall decrease in the percentage of those who rated themselves at the "uncomfortably fused" level of differentiation in relation to mother, father, and spouse. For example, 53.1 per cent rated themselves "uncomfortably fused" in 1972, 23.5 per cent did so in 1978. At the same time, those who rated themselves in the "uncomfortably differentiated" level in relation to each increased. For example, 11.6 per cent rated themselves "uncomfortably differentiated" in 1972; 53.1 per cent did so in 1978. This means there was a one step rise in level of differentiation from "uncomfortably fused" to "uncomfortably differentiated" with a significant number of the mother, father, and spouse relationships. With ex-spouse an uneven pattern of change appeared. In 1972, 83.3 per cent rated themselves as fused, in 1978 no one did. In 1972, 0 per cent rated themselves as "uncomfortably differentiated," in 1978, 66.7 per cent did, but that rise in level of differentiation was an uneven one (0%-19.9%-33.3%-66.7%). As an interesting exercise, the November 1977 and April 1978 responses were compared with the average number of ex-spouse contacts made for detriangling purposes during

comparative periods of time (table 6). From that comparison, it was evident that when the number of planned visit contacts was highest (April 1978), reported levels of differentiation were highest. When the number of planned visit contacts was lowest (November 1977), reported levels of differentiation were diverse. Such correlations do not follow in relation to letter and telephone contact. It must be recalled also, that all contact was at a minimal level and does not correlate well to the theoretical stance of differentiated behavior.

In group two, a similar pattern developed. There was an overall increase in level of differentiation with mother, similar to that evidenced in group one which indicated an "uncomfortably differentiated" level in 1978. With father, however, reported levels of differentiation did not change since terminating the training program (June 1977) which supports the findings that the status quo has been maintained. A diverse response was reported with spouse; and again, as in group one, a theroretically conflictual response was indicated with ex-spouse--that is, a high level of differentiation was reported in a relationship that bore little or no contact (see table 6 for Mean Number of Contacts for Detriangling Purposes).

Conclusions

In group one over time, the level of differentiation increased in relation to mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse. In April 1978, at the end of the study, over fifty per cent of the participants reported themselves

as "uncomfortably differentiated" with mother, father and spouse. This represented a rise in one level of differentiation since 1972 when over fifty per cent rated themselves as "uncomfortably fused." With ex-spouse the reported rise in level of differentiation ranged from 33.3 per cent fused in 1972 to a 66.7 per cent "uncomfortably differentiated" in 1978. Although a correlation between planned visits with ex-spouse and a rise in level of differentiation was observed, the minimal level of contact indicated seemed too small to support this finding. This could be a particularly interesting relationship for future, more definitive research.

In group two, over time, level of differentiation rose with mother, with sixty per cent reporting themselves at the "uncomfortably differentiated" level. Since the level of differentiation with father did not change over the last three testing periods, and since there were no planned visits (table 6) with father over the last two testing periods, it can be assumed that this relationship has not been worked on and that the status quo has been maintained. The level of differentiation with spouse also supported the previously mentioned fused relationship. As in group one, the highest level of differentiation with ex-spouse has been questioned because of reported minimal contact. Overall, this report has indicated only minimal effort to change self in the system.

TABLE 10

Percentage of Level of Differentiation, By Group,
for Each Testing Period

	Fused	Uncomfortably Fused	Uncomfortably Differentiated	Differentiated
Group 1 - with Mother (N = 17)				
1972	29.4%	53.1%	11.6%	5.9%
June 1977	0.0	59.0	29.3	11.7
November 1977	5.9	41.2	47.1	5.9
April 1978	11.8	23.5	53.1	11.6
Group 1 - with Father (N = 17)				
1972	29.4	53.1	17.5	0.0
June 1977	11.6	35.4	35.4	17.6
November 1977	5.8	35.4	35.4	23.4
April 1978	11.6	23.6	47.2	17.6
Group 1 - with Spouse				
1972 (N=11)	36.4	54.6	9.0	0.0
June 1977 (N=11)	36.4	18.1	45.5	0.0
November 1977 (N=13)	23.1	38.4	30.3	7.7
April 1978 (N=12)	16.7	16.7	58.3	8.3
Group 1 - with Ex-Spouse (N = 6)				
1972	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
June 1977	16.7	16.7	49.9	16.7
November 1977	16.7	33.3	33.3	16.7
April 1978	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
Group 2 - with Mother (N = 5)				
1972	20.0	40.0	20.0	20.0
June 1977	0.0	40.0	40.0	20.0
November 1977	0.0	20.0	60.0	20.0
April 1978	0.0	20.0	60.0	20.0

	Fused	Uncomfortably Fused	Uncomfortably Differentiated	Differentiated
Group 2 - With Father (N = 5)				
1972	0.0	60.0	20.0	20.0
June 1977	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0
November 1977	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0
April 1978	0.0	0.0	60.0	40.0
Group 2 - with Spouse				
1972 (N=2)	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
June 1977 (N=4)	50.0	25.0	0.0	25.0
November 1977 (N=4)	25.0	50.0	0.0	25.0
April 1978 (N=4)	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Group 2 - with Ex-Spouse				
1972 (N=2)	50.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
June 1977 (N=2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
November 1977 (N=3)	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7
April 1978 (N=3)	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7

Question 8: Phase in Coaching

Question 8 asked: Have members of group one been more advanced in their phase of coaching than members of group two?

To solicit information in answer to this question, participants were asked to respond to the following open-ended request, "What has been the most significant learning involving your family of origin research in this past year?" The question was first administered in June 1977 which was both just shortly after the end of the first year of the training program and at the beginning of this study. It was secondly administered in April 1978 which was both at the end of the second year of the training program and at the end of this study.

In both administrations, participants' responses to this "significant learning" question were matched against the four phases of therapy (coaching) scheme described by Meyer (p. 27) in order to place significant learnings within a developmental phase. To review, those four developmental phases were:

1. Phase one: identification of family patterns and processes.
2. Phase two: identification of the part that self plays in the patterns identified in the earlier phase.
3. Phase three: thoughtful preparation of strategies by which self can terminate his participation in the dysfunctional family pattern.
4. Phase four: the work of therapy--carrying out the strategies.

To compensate for those responses that fell into a pre-therapy category not accounted for in the Meyer "Phases", a pre-therapy phase was developed. This phase included all responses made by participants who were at the re-connecting, or developing a person to person relationship with family members, level.

When rated, these pre-therapy responses were assigned a quantity of 0. All other phases of therapy responses were assigned a quantity equal to the phase of therapy numbers. Responses that were rated as a phase two response were assigned a quantity of two, etc. Two raters, both counselors, completed this task.

According to the combined ratings, the following averages were computed:

TABLE 11
Average Phase in Coaching by Group

	June 1977	April 1978
Group 1	1.29	1.87
Group 2	1.40	1.20

As the above table indicated, participants in group one, in combined ratings, were at the 1.29 level of coaching in June 1977 and the 1.87 level in April 1978 meaning throughout the course of the second year in training

group one participants progressed slowly from the beginning level of phase one: identification of family patterns and processes, to a more advanced level of that same phase. Participants in group two were at the 1.40 level in June 1977 and 1.20 level in April 1978 meaning that throughout the past year they regressed slowly from a mid-point in phase one to an earlier level in the same stage. As mentioned, all ratings were tested to be within the "phase one or identification of family patterns and processes level." This rating also indicated support of the trend found throughout the study: change in group one is slow but definitely marked by a trend in the positive direction or toward greater differentiation; change in group two is also slow, and marked by a trend in the negative direction or toward greater undifferentiation or fusion.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, defining a self in one's family in relation to mother, father, spouse, and where appropriate, ex-spouse, has been measured and evaluated. Eight questions concerned with the defining a self process have been raised and responded to. Each of those eight questions has dealt with some phase of the defining a self process. Included among those questions have been measurements of response patterns under stress which involved assessment of a positive response in stressful situations in terms of differentiating behavior and undifferentiated response in stressful situations

in terms of attacking, withdrawing, and passive behavior. It has also included measurement for contacts made for detriangling purposes, planned strategies for change, level of satisfaction, level of cut off, level of differentiation and phases in "coaching".

C H A P T E R V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The present study examined change or movement toward change by group, over time in defining a self in one's family in relation to mother, father, spouse and when indicated, ex-spouse. It did so by evaluating participants' responses to selected behavioral factors as they related to that experience. Through the course of the study unchanged behavior was also examined. In this chapter, the results of those findings were discussed, some conclusions and implications drawn, some limitations accounted for, and some areas of future research located.

Findings

1. It has been found that over thirty-five per cent of the participants in group one (trainees) increased their characteristic differentiating response in relation to mother, father and spouse. Forty-five per cent did not change their characteristic differentiating response in relation to mother, father and spouse. In group two, an average of fifty-eight per cent decreased their characteristic differentiating response in relation to mother, father and

spouse. Responses to ex-spouse in both groups were of such a diverse nature no firm conclusions were drawn.

2. It has also been found in group one that among those who changed, there was a general decrease in attacking behavior with mother, spouse and ex-spouse and an increase in attacking behavior with father. In group two there was a prevelant increase in attacking behavior with both mother and father, an unchanged response with spouse, and a decrease in attacking behavior with ex-spouse. In both groups, however, between forty and fifty per cent of the participants did not change their characteristic attacking behavior in response to mother and father.

3. Group one respondents exhibited diverse responses in regard to withdrawing and passive behaviors with mother and father, a rather unchanged response with spouse, and a lessening in withdrawing and passive responses with ex-spouse. Group two respondents, on the other hand, exhibited a lessening in withdrawing and passive responses with mother and spouse, an unchanged response to father, and a diverse response to ex-spouse. In almost all cases where changed behavior was exhibited, participants became less withdrawn and less passive over time.

4. It was found among group one participants that the percentage of change in differentiating behavior with mother and father related to the percentage of change in letter and visit contact with mother and father. That is, the trend or movement toward change was related in both measures. For example, differentiating behavior increased by 35 per cent with mother and

father (Table 1). Letter and visit contact increased within that range (Table 4). Differentiating behavior did not change by 47 per cent with mother and father. Letter and visit contact did not change within that range. Differentiating behavior decreased with mother and father by 17 per cent. Letter and visit contact decreased accordingly. Such similarity did not exist with ex-spouse or throughout group two.

In group two the trend was toward a decrease in differentiating behavior with mother and father but not a decrease in contact. Contact actually increased, particularly in the measure of telephone calls.

5. Use of strategies by group one participants produced no clear cut findings, but offered some interesting observations on changed behavior. Certain strategies increased in use with particular family members while other strategies decreased in use with particular family members. For example, humor increased in use with spouse while it decreased in use with mother. Issue dealing increased in use with mother while it decreased in use with spouse. Humor and issue dealing increased equally in use with father and ex-spouse. Use of reversals increased in use with spouse, but no one else. Group one participants increased their use of strategies for the most part with spouse and ex-spouse, decreased them for the most part with mother and father, except for the use of issue dealing, which increased.

Group two participants increased the use of strategies with ex-spouse only, and decreased the use of strategies with mother, father and spouse. It can be said with some certainty that most participants found the use of

strategies somewhat difficult which lent support to a training precept which underscored use of strategies in detriangling work only after an objectivity in relation to one's family system has been secured.

6. a) With the level of satisfaction measure, there was a trend toward increased satisfaction by group one participants in relation to mother, father and ex-spouse. With spouse there was little change in level of satisfaction. With group two participants there was decrease in level of satisfaction with mother, father and ex-spouse. The high level of satisfaction with spouse did not change for most, however, when compared to the decrease in level of differentiation with spouse. This finding indicates "satisfaction with fusion" in the group two marital dyad.

b) Those group one participants who changed their level of satisfaction including increase and decrease with at least one significant person (mother, father, or spouse) over the course of the study, returned for the third year of training in the program. Of those trainees who did not change their level of satisfaction with at least one significant family member, no one returned for the third year of training. An increase or decrease, in level of satisfaction over time with at least one significant family member has acted as an indicator for continued participation in family therapy training. (It should be noted that reasons other than the one stated above prevented certain people from returning for the third year.)

7. In group one there was an increase in cut offs with mother and father, a decrease with ex-spouse and a diverse response with spouse. In group two there was an increase in cut offs with ex-spouse, and an unchanged response with mother, and spouse. With father there was an equal increase and unchanged level in cut off.

8. It has been found that increase in level of differentiation in the 1972, June 1977, November 1977 and April 1978 measure among group one participants rose from an "uncomfortably fused" relationship in 1972 to an "uncomfortably differentiated" relationship in 1978, and from a "fused" relationship with ex-spouse in 1972 to an "uncomfortably differentiated" relationship in 1978. The response with group two participants was somewhat different. In that group, respondents reported themselves as having increased their level of differentiation with mother from "uncomfortably fused" in 1972 to "uncomfortably differentiated" in 1978. The same was true with father, however, that relationship peaked at the "uncomfortably differentiated" level in June 1977 and has not changed since. With spouse the response was very diverse: In 1972 respondents reported themselves as "uncomfortably fused". In 1978 they viewed themselves as fused, uncomfortably fused, uncomfortably differentiated, and differentiated--each to an equal degree. With ex-spouse, there was a rise from a reported "fused" relationship (1972) to a "differentiated" relationship (1978). This response, when compared to the minimal contact maintained throughout the relationship, could at first, be considered theoretically conflictual. It could also provide an area of future research to determine what level of "maintained contact"

would be necessary to facilitate an increase in level of differentiation in this traditionally difficult relationship.

9. Group one and two participants were found to score on the phase one level of therapy or the "identification of family patterns and processes" phase, with group one having indicated an increase on that level over time, and group two having indicated a decrease on that level over time. Both groups were evaluated at a beginning level of "coaching" phases; group one indicated potential for increase, group two indicated potential for decrease.

Additional Findings: Systems Awareness of Cut Offs-- Change Stages

One of the more exciting findings of the study took place while listening and reviewing the tape-recorded interviews made at the end of the study with many of the participants. From their comments and explanations, there emerged a theme around the recognition and dealing with cut offs in the system. That theme involved levels of awareness, struggles, set backs, clarity and fusions. From participants' comments, a developmental sequence in two stages emerged. It was called Systems Awareness of Cut Offs: Change Stages. Stage one may be called the Pre-Change Stage which included three levels. Stage two, the Change Stage also included three levels.

The Pre-Change Stage:

1. The first level, was the "Everything's fine" level, was not prevalent in the study. Here people were not yet aware of the functioning of emotional systems; the presence of cut offs in the system were not recognized nor dealt with, and fusion was high. Pressed to talk about their relationship with parents, they responded: "No, I don't see or talk to them often, but everything is fine. Just fine."

2. The second level was the reactive-distancing phase, in which the person recognized that everything was not "just fine" and made sure s/he was far enough removed from the problem so as to deal neither with it nor with the relationship involved. This was accomplished through the internal cut off, seen in withdrawal and retreat, and through the physical distancing cut off, accomplished by a move away from parental proximity.

3. The third level was the "fuzzy" level found in the person who recognized that cut offs existed. The participant was attempting to work on them, but didn't have his/her own "seeing" of the emotional functioning clear enough. This level was characterized by statements such as, "Things aren't fine but I don't know what to do about them," or "I'm not as cut off as I was, but I just don't know what it was that reduced it."

The Change Stage or "New Awareness":

1. The first level found those who expanded their view of themselves, their system, and their functioning in that system, and expanded

some accomplishments made, yet at the same time recognized the work yet to be undertaken. It was characterized by such thoughts as, "You've come a long way, but you've a long way to go." A clarity about the nature of cut offs existed that was not present at the pre-change level.

2. The second level was the thoughtful planning phase, required to overcome cut offs. At this level, set backs were often encountered as the result of less than careful planning of other members of the system who attempted to force the individual back into the old mode of behavior in order to keep the emotional equilibrium of the system from being disturbed. This was characterized by one who said, "Well, I made a change, but it boomeranged. I'm working to get over the setback now."

3. The third level was found in active work on the relationship, resulting from clear understanding of the system's functioning and careful planning for solid change.

These above mentioned developmental levels, divided into Pre-Change and Change Stages, implied several explanations as they relate to the findings of this study:

1. That those participants who decreased their differentiating behavior, maintained contact and did not change their level of cut off were at the "Everything's fine" level, which translated reads, "I love my fusions."

2. That those participants who increased their differentiating behavior, maintained contact, and increased their level of cut off were, in fact, in the second and third level of the Pre-Change Stage, that is,

a. the re-active distancing level

b. the still "fuzzy" level

or, the first of the Change Stage, the "You've come a long way, but you've a long way to go" stage.

3. That those participants who increased their differentiating behavior, maintained contact, and decreased their level of cut off were all but non-existent in this study. One person in this study followed the above mentioned changes with father and one with spouse.

These findings, taken from the taped interviews, supported measurements and evaluations from the questionnaire which found participants to have begun the work of differentiation, but not to have completed it.

Conclusions and Implications

Response Patterns Under Stress

Differentiating Behavior. It has been found that members of group one who changed their characteristic differentiating behavior in response to mother, father and spouse over time, moved toward a more differentiating response with each. It has also been found that almost half the members of group one have not changed their characteristic differentiating behavior in response to mother and father, and over two-fifths of them have not changed their differentiating behavior in response to spouse.

Members of group two who changed have, on the other hand, moved toward a characteristically less differentiating response to mother, father and spouse, particularly so to spouse where seventy-five per cent moved to a less differentiating response. Thirty per cent did not change their differentiating response to mother and father. The changes in differentiating response to ex-spouse were of a varied nature.

What did these findings imply? There is understanding among Bowen theorists that "the kind of differentiation that can endure stressful situations occurs only after time, requiring first a sense of objectivity in relation to the family system and a clear recognition of the part self plays in the family's emotional environment."¹ Dr. Bowen at the 1971 Georgetown Family Symposium cautioned those present by saying, differentiation "is a big order

¹ Bowen, 1974f.

and a mission that cannot be accomplished quickly."² Considering that statement, and having applied it to changes found in this study, it could be tentatively concluded that a movement toward greater differentiation has been taking place with group one participants, and a movement toward lesser differentiation or greater fusion or cut off, has been possibly taking place with former trainees. More about that:

- a. The work of differentiating a self begun during the first year of training could be tentative in nature. In most cases, it could not be expected that a clear sense of objectivity in relation to the emotional system could be attained within that period of time, nor could it be expected that one could be objective about the part that self played in relation to the system.
- b. Because of the possible tentative quality of differentiating work, gains made could easily be lost.
- c. Such loss could result in decreased differentiation and a fusion explosion particularly in the most intense relationship, the marital dyad, as witnessed in the decrease in differentiation in that relationship.
- d. The marital dyad, not dramatically altered by those who remained in training, in no way reflected the increased fusion evident in

²
Bowen, 1974f.

those who left the training program, as evidenced in the seventy-five per cent decrease in differentiation in the marital relationship in that group.

- e. Since a sizeable sample of the participants in group one increased the level of differentiation with mother, father and spouse it can be concluded in support of Bowen Theory that work on increased differentiation in the parental triangle had reduced fusion in the marital dyad and/or that work on increased differentiation in the marital relationship had reduced fusion in the parental triangle. Bowen, particularly in writing about the differentiation of self has suggested such an approach (1974f).
- f. The ability to define a self in one's family has been fundamental to the training of effective family therapists in the Bowen tradition. Since group one participants have completed two years in the Bowen training program, it appeared that they have developed a trend toward greater differentiation with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse over time. It could be considered in the light of the trend that has emerged here, that the differentiation process takes longer than two years to accomplish. Assuming that differentiation is a valid construct for therapists in training, it could be suggested that:
 - 1) the Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy Training be designed as a three year program, and

consideration be given to possibly establishing it as a five year program.

- 2) While this study did not compare different training techniques and schedules (weekly versus quarterly) it might be worth recommending that training sessions during the first year particularly, parallel in form, "coaching" sessions with clients, that is, they be offered more frequently, preferably on the monthly schedule. As this undoubtedly poses a financial problem to those trainees in distant locations, suggestion three could be offered.
- 3) Monthly training sessions for first year candidates could be offered at a mid-west and west coast site, alleviating financial stress for trainees at distant locations.
- 4) The remaining years of training could continue as they are presently designed at Georgetown, but all trainees might be asked to commit themselves to the basic three year program.

Attacking Behavior. In group one, participants decreased their attacking behavior with mother; however, they increased their attacking behavior with father. What did this imply? Possibly, that the behavioral responses within the parental triangle were switched. That is, what had been an attacking posture with mother with father in the distant position was replaced with an attacking posture toward father, with mother in the distant position. One trainee, quoted earlier, explained the change in behavior in relation to father

this way:

It's like moving toward him from a withdrawn position. In some ways I don't consider that a differentiating change. It's just going to the other side, and maybe I can work back again.

In this example, a movement toward change was initiated: a behavior formerly engaged in with mother was transferred to father, leaving the trainee free to engage in a new behavior with mother. Similarly, the attacking behavior with father was also a new behavior. A change in behavior took place, representing a change in systems interaction. This could be called a pre-differentiating step. That is, one has freed self from performing with chronic behavior in a stressful situation (such as chronically attacking or chronically withdrawing) and has moved into a more selectedly chosen behavior, and thereby created a different space for self in the system. With continued person to person contact, planning and a developing objective view of self in relation to the family system, a pre-differentiating step may eventually become a clearly differentiated arena.

The attacking relationship with spouse in group one decreased most dramatically--by fifty per cent. How can this change be explained? Could it have been, as Bowen has suggested,

Trainees in which the focus is on the differentiation of self in the families of origin automatically make as much, or more, progress in working out the

relationship system with spouses and children as families seen in formal family therapy in which there is a principal focus on the interdependence in the marriage.³

In group two, participants increased their attacking posture with both mother and father forty to sixty per cent, while at the same time they reported an unchanged "not at all attacking" response in their marital relationship. How has this occurred? Participants have reported themselves as having decreased their level of differentiation with spouse by seventy-five per cent. When differentiation decreased, fusion increased. As a result, fusion--the opposite of differentiation--increased by seventy-five per cent. If fusion has increased, what has been the response when the fused dyad was under stress? It could be assumed that when fusion was high and stress was high, an attacking response could follow. It has been found, however, under stressful situations, that members of group two did not become more attacking with their spouse while under stress. Findings indicated they became only twenty-five per cent more attacking. How then has the stress been handled? It is this author's belief that in fused marital dyads where attacking behavior has not been expressed while under stress, the unexpressed emotion could possibly have been projected onto some other intimate family member, and that family member or members in this finding could have been the parents. Recalling the findings of this study, such could well be the case as evidenced by the forty to sixty per cent increase in attacking behavior in relation to parents. This conclusion can be considered as thinking parallel with Bowen's theoretical

³ Bowen, 1974f, p. 83.

position called Projection of the Problem onto the child in which he has described the projection of unresolved parental fusion onto a particular child (Bowen, 1978). This author's conclusion is simply a reverse of the same kind of projection described by Bowen, that is, rather than the projection of the unresolved parental fusion onto the child, the unresolved marital fusion was projected onto the parent.

Withdrawn and Passive Behaviors. Few conclusions can be drawn from observing the withdrawn and passive behaviors of each group. Some questions can be raised, however, and a few speculations made that might bear fruit at a future time. For example: Members of group two decreased their withdrawn and passive behaviors (they were not as withdrawn or passive) with their spouse by fifty per cent, at the same time decreased their withdrawn and passive behaviors with mother and father by sixty per cent. As mentioned earlier, they also decreased their differentiating behavior with mothers by sixty per cent and with fathers by forty per cent. Taken as a whole, what could one infer? If one was not behaving in a withdrawn manner or in a passive manner with mother, father or spouse and at the same time was not differentiating with any of them, what was happening? It was explained above that some of the attacking behavior exhibited with mother and father could be the result of unresolved issues in the fused marital dyad projected onto the parents, in the form of attacking behavior. But otherwise what has happened? It could possibly have been that the marital dyads in which there was a decrease in differentiating, attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior that

a kind of happy marital bliss existed. Perhaps this was so. But what happens when fused couples differed? Will differentiating, attacking, withdrawing and passive behavior continue to decline? Will one person in the marital dyad give in to the will of the other for the sake of harmony? Will attacks on mother and father increase? From the information available here it seems unwise to draw any further conclusions. It is, however, possible to speculate that stressful behavior, not handled in the marital dyad, either through increased differentiation, or through increased attacking, withdrawing or passive behavior, does go somewhere, and if not up into the parental generation (as explained under attacking behavior), then perhaps down into the children's generation, or into work, or other possible close relationships. Such possibilities unfortunately can only be speculations. In both groups there was a decrease in withdrawn and passive behavior with ex-spouse, but, since contacts with ex-spouse were unusually limited, it cannot be inferred that this indicated any real change.

Planned Contacts for Detriangling Purposes

The act of defining a self in one's family is an action-oriented undertaking. To begin with Bowen has said, "To make a differentiating process work, one has to continue in relationship with the family system."⁴

⁴ Bowen, 1972, p. 159.

For the purposes of this study, the step following "Contact for contact sake," or the detriangling step has been evaluated. Participants engaged the family member for the purpose of freeing "self" from a formerly emotionally 'hooked' position, and did this through purposeful, planned contact with the particular family member, usually under the direction of their "coach" or supervisor. Speaking of the detriangling effort Kerr has said:

The effort has to be organized and not fly by the seat of the pants. It takes careful planning and nearly always requires the assistance of a "coach" or therapist who has been successful in his own family . . . Frequent trips home are necessary, but only after careful planning of what one hopes to accomplish and the method for doing it.⁵

What did these findings imply?

First, that a relationship existed between change in level of differentiation with mother and father among group one participants and change in percentage of contact through planned visits. The trend among this group was toward an increase in level of differentiation and an increase in visits. Although it does not seem significant to talk about cause and effect, it does seem significant to point out that both increase in level of differentiation and increase in number of planned visits did seem to move together for some reason.

Second, since the primary form of contact maintained with mother and father by group two participants was through use of the telephone, and

⁵ Kerr, 1974b, pp. 57, 58.

since a trend toward decrease in differentiating behavior took place with mother and father, it could be concluded that telephone contact was not necessarily the most effective form for detriangling efforts, or that, although it could be effective, it must be combined with either letter or visit contact.

Third, because of the greater number of planned visits with mother and father than members of group two, it could be concluded that group one participants were more actively involved in the defining of self process.

Fourth, in relation to ex-spouse, with whom detriangling contacts were also measured, it was difficult to draw conclusions and implications in reference to group one respondents. No clear theme emerged. In group two meanwhile, the majority of respondents did not change their level of differentiating response with ex-spouse, and the same majority did not change their letter or visit contacts, but did increase telephone contact.

In cases where there has been no change over time this author would agree with Kerr who said, "When there is no change, the person has either not maintained enough contact or his level of anxiety is higher than he thought."⁶

⁶Kerr, 1974b, p. 59.

Planned Strategies for Change

The use of planned strategies for differentiating purposes has been an essential component in the defining of a self in one's family. Bowen (in explaining his own work with his family of origin) said, "It took much more than the person-to-person relationship to get free of the emotional binds of the triangle."⁸ His goal was to stay in contact with his family "without becoming fused into the emotional system."⁹ In order to do so, certain actions had to be taken where words had previously failed.

Action is required when words fail to detriangle in emotional systems. . . so I devised a plan to stir up the family emotional system, using old issues from the past around which to work.¹⁰

His plan included working alone without "allies", dealing with "issues that would touch each relationship cleanly. . . presenting material in terms of stories,"¹¹ using reversals, and keeping the entry process light enough to avoid defending anything or attacking any issues.

My immediate goal was to avoid defending anything, or attacking any issues, to be able to avoid getting angry even with provocation, and to have an instant casual response to any comment.¹²

Based upon this original work of Bowen, the strategies measured in this study have been drawn. They included use of humor, use of reversals,

⁸ Bowen, 1972, p. 146.

⁹ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 151, 153.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 154.

¹² Ibid., p. 158.

issue dealing, "I" position and use of stories or depersonalized examples. They were measured in terms of use: "not at all" typically, "somewhat" typically and "very" typically. They were selected as tools to assist in the working out of a self through extended options within relationships. Strategies were used most effectively when the functioning system was seen objectively, where the triangles were clearly drawn, and when each individual's own functioning in the system was understood. The purpose in using strategies, then, was to free self in the system through the use of purposeful, planned activity.

It need be carefully noted, lest the strategies be thought of as ends in themselves, that they were the tools of freeing self in the emotional system; they provided the options, but did not replace the life long task to see self more clearly.

This study measured the typical use group one and group two participants made of strategies in order to detriangle or define themselves in relationship with mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse. The most generalized finding has been that group one participants used strategies across the board "somewhat typically" to define themselves with each significant family member. Group two participants have used strategies in more diverse ways ranging from "extremely typical" use of issue dealing with spouse to "not at all typical" use of humor with father. From these findings certain implications were drawn:

First, the "seeing" clarity, or systems objectivity, had partially emerged among group one participants so there was an ease in strategy use on the "somewhat", but not "very typical", level of use.

Second, participants in the training program appeared to have listened to and heeded Dr. Bowen's frequent warnings not to use strategies "unless you know what you're doing."¹³

Third, certain strategies, particularly the use of reversals, required greater skill to use effectively, and as a result were used "not at all typically" by most participants, it could be explained.

Fourth, use of certain strategies, particularly those used "not at all" typically were not a part of the participant's strategy repertoire.

Fifth, the system was not seen objectively enough to use strategies.

Sixth, a status quo relationship had been established and interest in expanding relationship options was not explored. In cases when the use of strategies did not lead to greater differentiating as with group two participants, this could be an explanation.

¹³Training Sessions, Georgetown Family Center, April 1978.

Level of Satisfaction

Since the trend toward an increased level of satisfaction with mother and father corresponded to an increased level of differentiation with mother and father, over time, it was concluded that those members of group one who increased their level of differentiation with mother and with father also increased their level of satisfaction with mother and father. It was further concluded that those members of group one who decreased, or reported unchanged, their level of differentiation with mother and father, also decreased, or reported unchanged, their level of satisfaction with mother and father. As might be suspected, there existed a linkage between change in level of differentiation and change in level of satisfaction. It was concluded that change in level of differentiation affected change in level of satisfaction, and conversely, change in level of satisfaction affected change in level of differentiation.

A similar, but reverse pattern in relation to mother and father expressed itself among group two participants. In that group the overriding trend was toward a decrease in level of differentiation which corresponded to a decrease in level of satisfaction.

Change in level of satisfaction over time, with significant family members, could be concluded to have affected continuation in the training program and work on defining a self in one's family. Those trainees who did

not change their level of satisfaction, did not continue in the training program; those who did change their level of satisfaction with at least one significant family member, were likely to continue in the training program. These findings support and particularize the nature of change in level of satisfaction as it related to change in the primary parental triangle described by Bowen. Furthermore, it underscored the fact that those people who continued in the Georgetown Training Program for the third year were trainees who changed their level of satisfaction with at least one significant family member.

Emotional Cut Offs

Bowen has described two kinds of emotional cut offs. One he defined as the internal cut off, in which the person is physically present during times of tension but does not deal with the emotionality of the relationship. Such a form of cut off finds its outlet in physical illness, emotional dysfunction such as depression, and social dysfunction such as drinking. The second kind of cut off is actualized through physical distance. In this instance, the undealt with emotionality in the relationship to parents is displaced onto other relationships, frequently the marital relationship, which, when tension gets high, erupts or dissolves (Bowen 1974f).

This study has explored the presence of emotional cut offs in relationships, though it has not distinguished between "kinds" of cut offs. In group one, level of cut offs have increased in relation to mother and father--the same

relationships in which there has been an increase in differentiating behavior. It could be concluded from this finding that as level of differentiating behavior increased, level of cut off increased. This could have been the case, for as systems awareness grew, awareness of the presence of fusion in the system also grew. As this awareness increased, group one participants chose to move out of the fusion. They did so by increasing their level of cut off. This process is often referred to as "distancing" which, whether accomplished in terms of physical or emotional distance, puts space between self and the person with whom one is fused. This is considered a beginning step in the differentiation of self process, and an indicator of the functioning level of the group as a whole in relation to mother and father. Change in level of cut off with spouse was more diverse. This diverse response has been interpreted as meaning, in cases of increased cut off, an explanation, as mentioned above for mother and father. In cases of decrease in cut off, it could be concluded that the level of differentiation within the marital relationship was secure and neither emotional nor physical distance was required. On the other hand, it could mean the participant was cutting off less, and fusing more. It would be difficult from the information available, to draw precise conclusions. With ex-spouse cut off decreased, possibly reflective of the increased contact, particularly in terms of letters.

From the noticeable unchanged level in cut off with mother, father and spouse in group two, it could be concluded that a "status quo" has been entered into and noticeable change in this particular measure has not taken place. There

was an increase in cut off with ex-spouse which was supported by the decline in number of contacts over time. From this one could but conclude this relationship could be moving toward a more permanent kind of cut off.

Level of Differentiation--Four Measures

It can be concluded from the four measures of differentiation taken for 1972, June 1977, November 1977 and April 1978 that group one participants have maintained a steady increase in level of differentiation with mother, father and spouse throughout. It could be implied that because the level of differentiation as reported had steadily increased and contact had been maintained, that a greater sense of systems objectivity had been gained and the work of differentiation was not complete.

Phases of Coaching

Conclusions based upon the "phase of coaching" findings indicated once again that group one participants were slowly increasing their ability to see their family system with clarity and objectivity while group two participants were slowly decreasing in their ability to do so. This finding supported others mentioned previously in the study.

Limitations

This study was limited to the trainees in the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy at the Georgetown Family Center. Twenty-two members participated. The group divided for comparison purposes into group one, the seventeen trainees who continued for the second year in the training

program, and group two, the five former trainees who did not continue in the training past the first year of study. Although support for the defining of a self process as set forth in this study was determined through comparative group responses, more conclusive evidence could possibly have been drawn had the two groups been of more equal size.

As much as there was a difference in group size, there were also certain "intactness of family structure" differences. Three out of the five participants, or sixty per cent of the group two participants were divorced, compared to six out of the seventeen, or thirty-five per cent, of the group one participants. Out of five group two participants, two had one deceased parent, one, had two deceased parents: a total of four deceased parents out of a possible ten, or forty per cent of the parents were deceased. Out of seventeen group one participants, four had one deceased parent and two had two deceased parents; a total of eight deceased parents out of a total of thirty-four parents, or twenty-four per cent of the parents were deceased.

However, there were similarities between the two groups. All were mental health professionals; all had at least one year of training at the Georgetown Family Center; all were "into" generational work, at least to some degree. It would have been interesting to compare mental health professionals from diverse schools of family training. However, this would be an unlikely comparison, since all family therapists do not adhere to the need for generational work in the therapists' own family. Were it possible, a study so designed might produce some interesting findings.

Because the data was collected through self reports, caution must be used since, except through interview, the responses were not verified by observing actual behaviors. Also since the participants were aware of Bowen's Theory, they may have responded to be consistent with the theory. The follow-up interviews were used to counter this limitation, but it was not possible to verify the many different responses.

The questionnaires used in this study were designed by the author to measure aspects of defining a self in one's family process. It would be of value to have the questionnaires, particularly the second questionnaire (Appendix C), retested with other participants for validity purposes. It would be helpful if the attacking, withdrawing and passive labels to behaviors were removed. In their place behaviors could be described by their definitions only as (1) movement toward another in anger; (2) movement away from another through unavailability; (3) no movement toward or away from another through inactivity, passivity. The questionnaire should collect information on mother, father, spouse and ex-spouse only. Open ended questions on the effect of specific changes in the parental triangle and interlocking triangles could also be included.

The significant advantage of this study has been that change, or movement toward change, has been measured and evaluated on two groups of family trainees, students at a major family therapy center. This study will hopefully add to those of a similar thrust that have preceded it and add impetus to those that will succeed it.

Implications for Further Research

Suggested areas for further research in the defining of a self in one's family could be endless. But, limiting those areas to questions raised in this study, the following ideas, suggestions, and topics were offered:

1. A comparative study between participants in the weekly ongoing Georgetown Family Training Program with participants in the Special Post-graduate Family Training Program, could be conducted measuring the effectiveness in training design as it relates to differentiating a self in one's family of origin.
 2. An in-depth study of the process of defining a self in one's family, is called for, asking the questions of each trainee: What triangles are operating in the system? With whom are they operating? How do they get activated? What specific behaviors activate them? Activation requires what behavioral expression? How are they calmed? What specific behavior calms them?
- And to continue: What is each individual's response to the primary parental triangle? How does father respond to differentiating efforts made with mother? How does mother respond to differentiating efforts made with father? Most importantly, what are the trainees' responses to individual differentiating efforts with each, mother and father? What is each individual's response to sibling triangles, to triangles in the extended family system?
3. The entire area of emotional cut offs has yet to be explored fully. One possible implication would be to test the specific cut off effects death

and divorce have on the family emotional system. What characteristics do families possess in which both death and divorce do not leave cut off effects? What characteristics do families possess in which both death and divorce do leave cut off effects? What are the measurable differences?

4. Empirical research is needed on the validity of the constructs of fusion and differentiation. How are they to be measured objectively? Is differentiation of one's family necessary for effective clinical practice?

5. More detailed information is needed on the family emotional system of those who continue with training and those who leave the training program.

6. And lastly, the terms of this study could be more fully evaluated over a five year period. It is suggested that this study, conducted on the participants of the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy, become a longitudinal group study on The Defining of a Self in One's Family process.

Summary

In conclusion, this study has examined certain factors relevant to the task of defining a self in one's family as undertaken by students in the 1976 Special Postgraduate Program in Family Therapy at the Georgetown Family Center. Measurements and evaluations have supported the predominant questions of the study suggesting that those who remained in the training program for two years were more successful in the work of defining a self than those who left the training program at the end of the first year. It further supported the belief that the task of defining a self takes longer than two years to complete, yet a clear initiation of that task was undertaken within that time. Suggestions for further longitudinal evaluation with the present population were also made.

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APPENDIX A

Bowen's Letter

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

149

3800 RESERVOIR ROAD, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20007

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

May 19, 1977

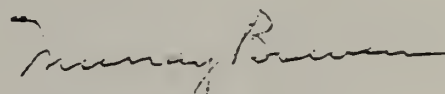
Members of Section II

Georgetown Special Postgraduate Training Program

When the course last met, Anne Tobin-Alne asked if it would be permissible to ask other members of the Postgraduate group to participate in a possible research study on the results of attempting to define a self in families of origin. We did not have a policy on this issue and she was asked to wait until we could discuss the issue in our Training Committee.

Georgetown is involved in this since you came together in an activity sponsored by the Georgetown Family Center. The Committee decided that Georgetown can discharge its responsibility by writing each of you ahead of time, after which Anne will be free to contact each of you, and each of you is free to make your own decision about whether or not you wish to participate.

This letter will go to each member of the course that started in June 1976, and ended its fourth session in April, 1977. If Anne's thinking has evolved to the point she is willing to undertake the study, you will probably hear directly from her. To my knowledge, the only previous such study was the one reported by Paulina McCullough at the Annual Symposium in 1976.



Murray Bowen, M.D.
Clinical Professor
Director, Georgetown Family
Center

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire: "Defining A Self in One's Family"

DEFINING A SELF IN ONE'S FAMILY
RESEARCH PROJECT

131

Anne Tobin-Ashe
School of Education
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003

This interview is part of a dissertation research project. The project intends to examine the process of conducting family research among students of the Postgraduate Family Therapy Center, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 20007. Your cooperation in answering this interview is greatly appreciated. Information given by you on this interview is entirely voluntary and will be handled by research personnel only. Your privacy will be respected.

Respondent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Appointment Time: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Informant Number: _____

Duration of Interview: _____ Hours _____ Minutes

Date: _____

☐ I would like results

☐ Would not like results

1. Name: _____

2. Sex: Male ☐
 Female ☐

3. Age: Under 21 ☐
 21-35 ☐
 35-50 ☐
 Over 50 ☐

4. Place of Birth: _____

5. Education: High School graduate ☐
 College graduate ☐
 Postgraduate ☐ Degree: _____

6. Occupation: _____

7. Married: Yes ☐ Date: _____
 No ☐

8. Divorced: Yes ☐ Date: _____
 No ☐

9. Widowed: Yes ☐ Date: _____
 No ☐

10. Religious Affiliation: _____
 Protestant ☐
 Catholic ☐
 Jewish ☐
 Other ☐ Name: _____

1. Name: _____
Last First
2. Address: _____ (street)
_____ (city, state)
3. Living Yes _____
No _____ Date of Death: _____
4. Age: Under 55 _____
55-70 _____
70-85 _____
Over 85 _____
5. Date of Marriage: _____
6. Divorced: Yes _____ Date: _____
No _____
7. Place of Birth: _____
8. U. S. Citizen: Yes _____
No _____
9. Ethnic origins: Paternal _____
Maternal _____
10. Education: Less than high school _____
High School graduate _____
College graduate _____
Postgraduate _____ Degree: _____
11. Occupation: _____
12. Religious affiliation: _____
Protestant _____
Catholic _____
Jewish _____
Other _____ Name: _____
13. Names of Siblings: _____ Position in family: _____

1. Name:

154

Last Maiden First

2. Address:

(street)

(city, state)

3. Living:

Yes

No

Date of Death: _

4. Age:

Under 55

55-70

70-85

Over 85

5. Date of Marriage: _

6. Divorced: Yes

Date: _

No

7. Place of Birth: _

8. U. S. Citizen:

Yes

No

9. Ethnic origins: Paternal

Maternal

10. Education: Less than high school

High School graduate

College graduate

Postgraduate

Degree: _

11. Occupation: _

12. Religious affiliation:

Protestant

Catholic

Jewish

Other

Name: _

13. Names of Siblings:

Position in family:

1. Name: _____
2. Sex: Male ☐
Female ☐
3. Age: Under 21 ☐
21-35 ☐
35-50 ☐
Over 50 ☐
4. Place of Birth: _____
5. Education: High school graduate ☐
College graduate ☐
Postgraduate ☐ Degree: _____
6. Occupation: _____
7. Formerly married:
Yes ☐ Date divorced/widowed: _____
No ☐
8. Religious affiliation:
Protestant ☐
Catholic ☐
Jewish ☐
Other ☐ Name: _____

1. Maternal grandfather:

Name: _____

Ordinal position: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Living: Yes ☐No ☐

Date of death: _____

Ethnic origin: _____

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Name of Siblings: _____

Position in family: _____

Single marriage: _____

Yes ☐No ☐

Which one: _____

2. Maternal grandmother:

Name: _____ Ordinal position: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Living: Yes ☐No ☐

Date of Death: _____

Ethnic origin: _____

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Names of Siblings:

Position in family:

Single marriage:

Yes ☐

No ☐

Which one:_____

1. Paternal grandfather:

Name: _____ Ordinal position: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Living: Yes ☐No ☐

Date of death: _____

Ethnic origin: _____

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Names of Siblings: `

Position in family:

_____Single marriage: Yes ☐No ☐

Which one: _____

2. Paternal grandmother:

Name: _____ Ordinal position: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Living: Yes ☐No ☐

Date of Death: _____

Ethnic Origin: _____

Education: _____

Occupation: _____

Names of Siblings:

Position in family:

Single marriage: Yes ☐
 No ☐

Which one: _____

I. IDENTIFICATION DATA: SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

1. Name:

Address:

Relationship:

Reason for significance:

2. Name:

Address:

Relationship:

Reason for significance:

3. Name:

Address:

Relationship:

Reason for significance:

2. How far did you travel?

Stay?

<u>Location</u>	to	<u>Location</u>	<u>Days</u>
-----------------	----	-----------------	-------------

3. With whom did you visit?

c. With whom did you visit?			
Name	Relation	Purpose of Visit	Significance of Visit

4. Telephone and letter contact:

Name	Relation	Purpose of contact	Significance of contact

5. New discoveries:

- a. Family members

- b. Family myths

- c. Family skeletons, ghosts

6. Future plans:

164

Name	Relation	Plan

7. List the significant changes in your relationship with members of your family this past year.

1. Above the names printed below, place an appropriate colored sticker in answer to the question: WHAT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT HAVE MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY HAD ON MY LIFE? (add and identify significant others)

Code:

Blue - Great impact
Green- Much impact
Red - Not much impact
Yellow- No impact

Paternal
grandfather

Paternal
grandmother

Maternal
grandfather

Maternal
grandmother

Father

Mother

Sibling, name Sibling, name

Sibling, name Sibling, name

Spouse

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

2. Above the names printed below place an appropriate colored sticker describing your level of differentiation (individuation) from each.

Blue - Differentiation

Green - Uncomfortable differentiation

Red - Uncomfortable fusion

Yellow- Fusion

Paternal
grandfather

Paternal
grandmother

Maternal
grandfather

Maternal
grandmother

Father

Mother

Sibling, name Sibling, name

Sibling, name Sibling, name

Spouse

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

3. Complete the page below describing with colored stickers your level of differentiation with each person 5 years ago.

Blue -Differentiation
 Green -Uncomfortable differentiation
 Red -Uncomfortable fusion
 Yellow-Fusion

Paternal
grandfather

Paternal
grandmother

Maternal
grandfather

Maternal
grandmother

Father

Mother

Sibling, name

Sibling, name

Sibling, name

Sibling, name

Spouse

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

Child, name

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire: "Defining a Self in One's Family"

DEFINING A SELF IN ONE'S FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE

Identification number:

Date:

Please complete and return by April 30, 1978 to:

Anne Tobin-Ashe
87 Echo Hill Drive
Stamford, Ct., 06903

1. What has been the most significant learning involving your family of origin research this past year?
2. Other learnings:
3. What has been the most significant disappointment?
4. What would you do differently?
5. What effect has this research had in changing your life?
6. What "gets in the way" of your doing the research?

RESPONSE PATTERNS UNDER STRESS*

172

When you are relating to particular family members, how characteristic of your behavior under stress is each of the following response patterns. Please circle one number on each line. (Any deceased person, describe your actions when s/he was alive.)

Examples: attacking--movement toward others in relationship through anger, intimidation, etc.
 withdrawing--movement away from others in relationship through unavailability, avoidance, etc.
 passive--no movement towards or away from others in relationship through inactivity, lack of initiative, etc.
 differentiating--movement toward and away from others in relationship through a calm "I" position.

with <u>MOTHER</u>	Not at all		Somewhat		Extremely	
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6
with <u>FATHER</u>						
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6
with <u>SIBLING 1</u>						
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6
with <u>SIBLING 2</u>						
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

*Answer for only those family members who you have. Identify under OTHER additional siblings, children, ex spouse, step children, etc.

with <u>SIBLING 3</u>	Not at all		Somewhat		Extremely		173
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	
with <u>SIBLING 4</u>							
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	
with <u>SPOUSE</u>							
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	
with <u>CHILD 1</u>							
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	
with <u>CHILD 2</u>							
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6	

with <u>CHILD 3</u>	Not at all		Somewhat		Extremely	
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with CHILD 4

1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with MATERNAL GRANDFATHER

1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with PATERNAL GRANDFATHER

	Not at all		Somewhat		Extremely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with OTHER:

	Relationship					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

with OTHER:

	Relationship					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. attacking	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. withdrawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. passive	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. differentiating	1	2	3	4	5	6

PLANNED STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE--PART I

In the past three months, how many times (please list specific number) did you write letters, make telephone calls or use time during visits with particular family members for the planned purpose of initiating a differentiating, detriangling or defining of self move?* If you're not able to give the exact number of times, try to give your best estimate.

	Letter Writing (# of times)	Telephone Calls (# of times)	Visits (# of times)
Mother	_____	_____	_____
Father	_____	_____	_____
Sibling 1	_____	_____	_____
Sibling 2	_____	_____	_____
Sibling 3	_____	_____	_____
Sibling 4	_____	_____	_____
Spouse	_____	_____	_____
Child 1	_____	_____	_____
Child 2	_____	_____	_____
Child 3	_____	_____	_____
Child 4	_____	_____	_____
Maternal Grandmother	_____	_____	_____
Maternal Grandfather	_____	_____	_____
Paternal Grandmother	_____	_____	_____
Paternal Grandfather	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

*Answer for only those family members who you have, and who are alive. Identify under OTHER additional siblings, children, ex spouse, step children or member significant to your detriangling work.

PLANNED STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE--PART II

In the past three months, when you were relating to particular family members, how typical for you has it been to initiate the following differentiating, detriangling or defining of self strategies? Please circle one number on each line.*

USE OF HUMOR (detoxifying a serious situation through the use of a light comment creating laughter)

	Not at all typical		Somewhat typical		Extremely typical	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

* Answer for only those family members who you have, and who are alive. Identify under OTHER additional siblings, children, ex spouse, step children or member significant to your detriangling work.

USE OF REVERSALS (saying the opposite of what is usually said in response to someone else)						
	Not at all typical			Somewhat typical		Extremely typical
Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

USE OF MAINTAINED "I" POSITION (making a clear statement, neither offensive nor defensive, of one's thought or feelings on a subject)

Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

ISSUE DEALING (bringing up of an emotional issue and dealing with the emotional issue between you and the particular family member.)

	Not at all typical			Somewhat typical		Extremely typical
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mother						
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other:* _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

USE OF DEPERSONALIZED EXAMPLES (citing a similar example from the life of an unnamed person)

Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sibling 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Child 4	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandmother	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paternal Grandfather	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other; _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____	1	2	3	4	5	6

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

132

In the past three months, when you were relating to particular family members, what percentage of the time did you feel satisfied? Please circle one % for each line.*

	% 0	% 20	% 40	% 60	% 80	% 100
Mother						
Father						
Sibling 1						
Sibling 2						
Sibling 3						
Sibling 4						
Spouse						
Child 1						
Child 2						
Child 3						
Child 4						
Maternal Grandmother						
Maternal Grandfather						
Paternal Grandmother						
Paternal Grandfather						
Other: _____						

*Answer for only those family members who you have. Identify under OTHER additional siblings, children, ex spouse, step children or member significant to your detriangling work.

LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL CUT OFFS

193

In the past three months, when you were relating to particular family members, what percentage of the time did you feel emotionally cut off? Please circle one % on each line.*

	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mother	0	20	40	60	80	100
Father	0	20	40	60	80	100
Sibling 1	0	20	40	60	80	100
Sibling 2	0	20	40	60	80	100
Sibling 3	0	20	40	60	80	100
Sibling 4	0	20	40	60	80	100
Spouse	0	20	40	60	80	100
Child 1	0	20	40	60	80	100
Child 2	0	20	40	60	80	100
Child 3	0	20	40	60	80	100
Child 4	0	20	40	60	80	100
Maternal Grandmother	0	20	40	60	80	100
Maternal Grandfather	0	20	40	60	80	100
Paternal Grandmother	0	20	40	60	80	100
Paternal Grandfather	0	20	40	60	80	100
Other	0	20	40	60	80	100
	0	20	40	60	80	100
	0	20	40	60	80	100
	0	20	40	60	80	100

*Answer for only those family members who you have. Identify under OTHER additional siblings, children, ex spouse, step children or member significant to your detriangling work.

LEVEL OF DIFFERENTIATION

Above the names printed below place an appropriate colored sticker describing your level of differentiation from each particular family member.

Code 1 Blue - Differentiation
 2 Green - Uncomfortable differentiation
 3 Red - Uncomfortable fusion
 4 Yellow - Fusion

Paternal
grandfather

Paternal
grandmother

Maternal
grandfather

Maternal
grandmother

Father

Mother

Sibling, (name)

Sibling, (name)

Sibling, (name)

Sibling, (name)

Spouse

Other

Other

Child, (name)

Child, (name)

Child, (name)

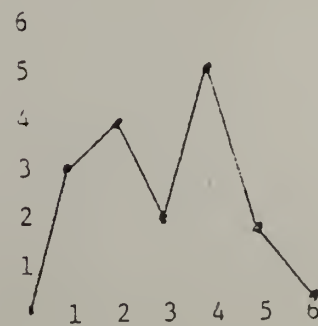
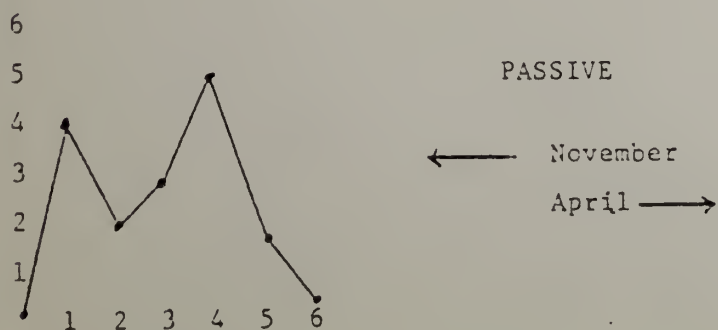
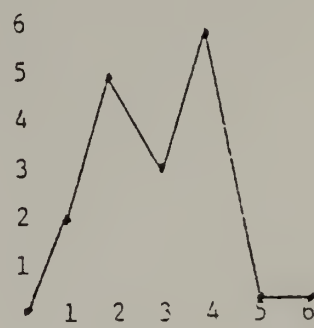
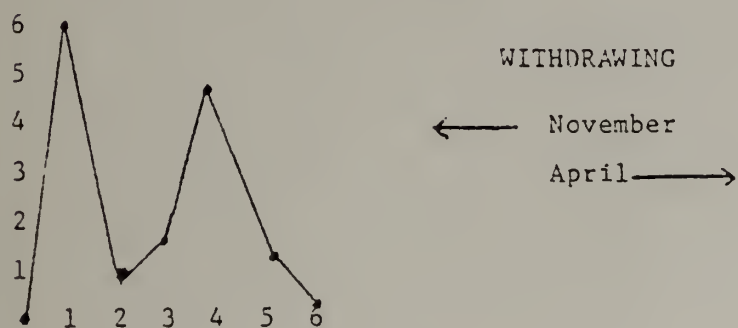
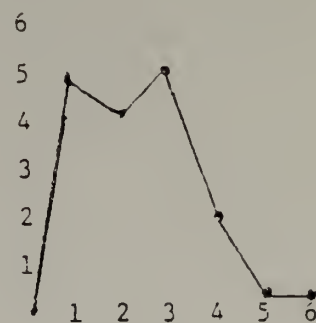
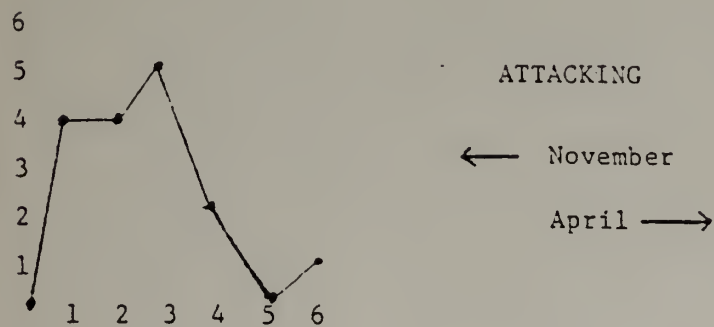
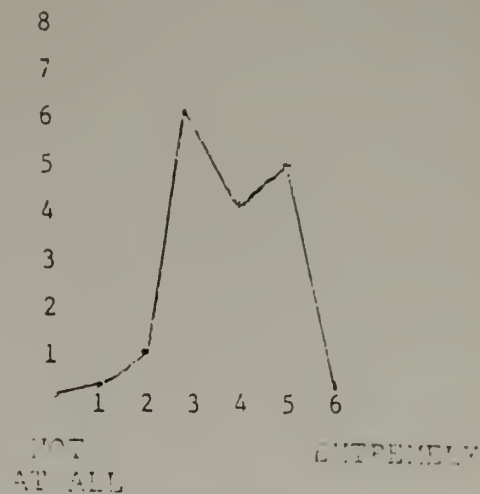
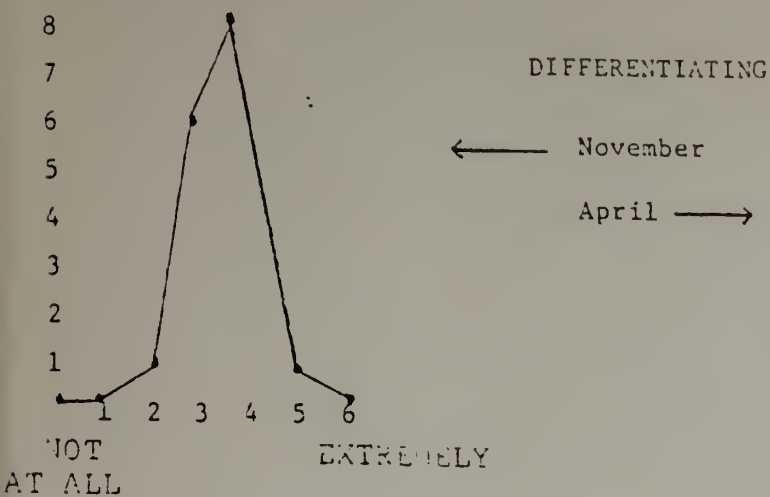
Child, (name)

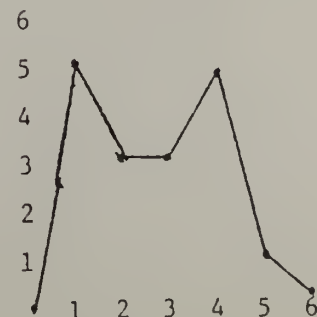
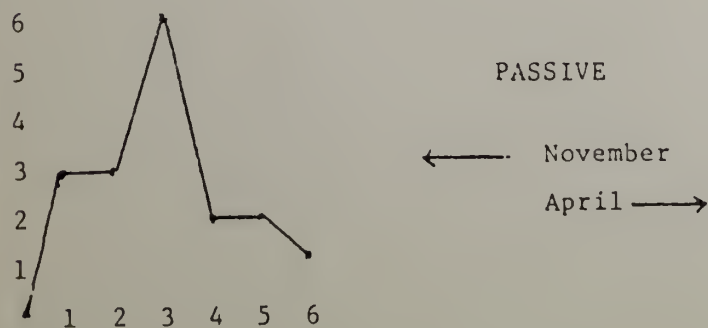
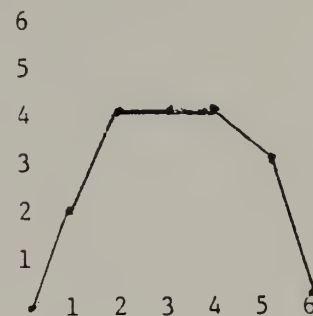
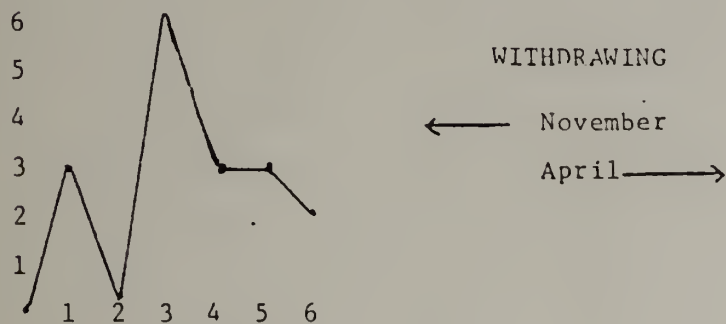
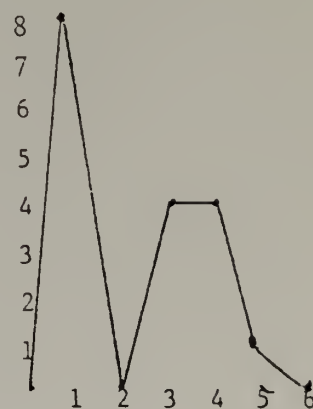
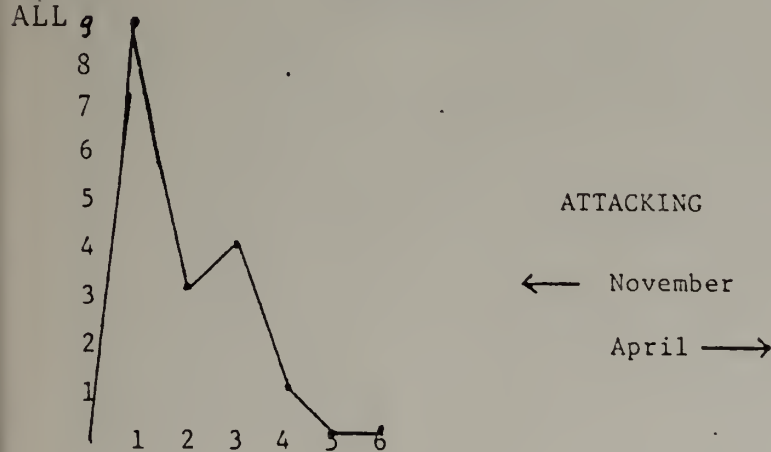
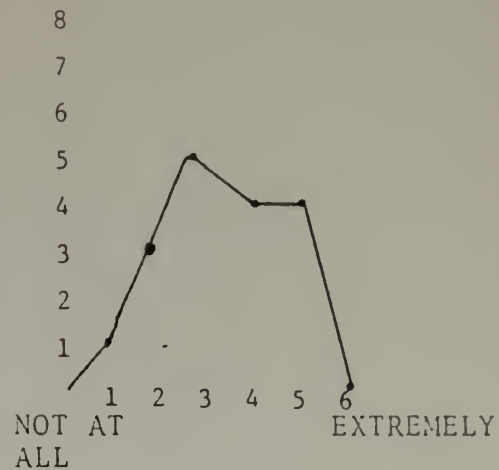
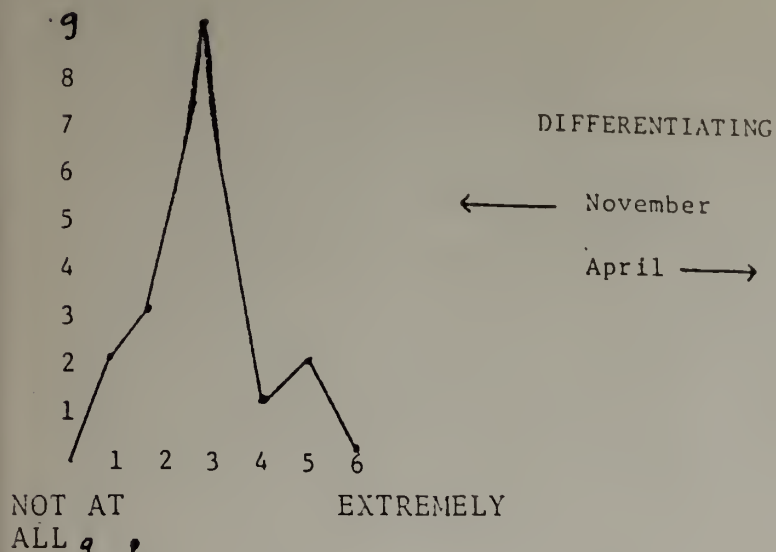
DECEASED MEMBERS

In the past three months, when you have been relating to particular family members, how, and with whom have you initiated detriangling, differentiating or defining of self, moves with regard to deceased members? Please describe.

APPENDIX D

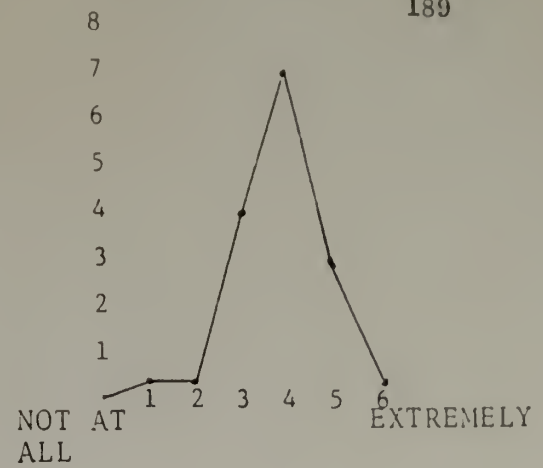
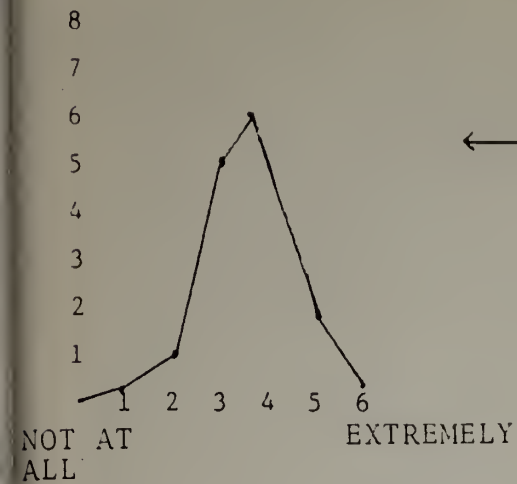
Graphs: Response Patterns Under Stress





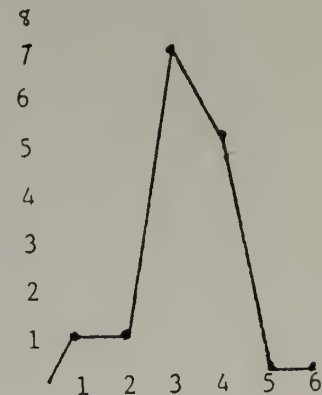
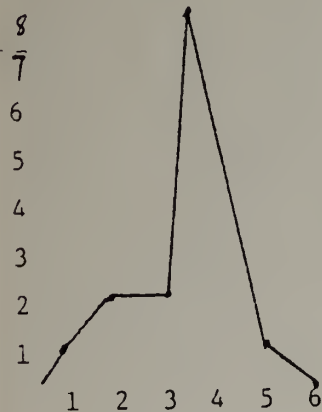
DIFFERENTIATING

← November
April →



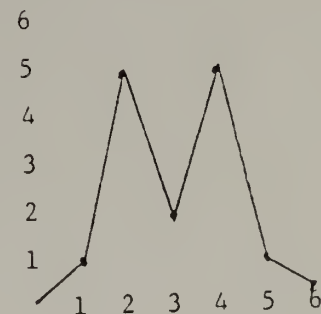
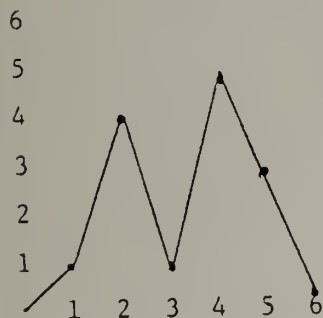
ATTACKING

← November
April →



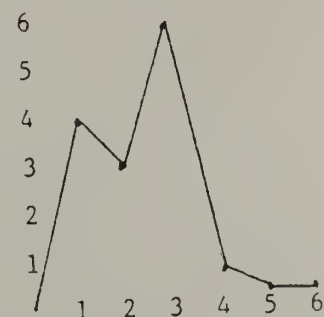
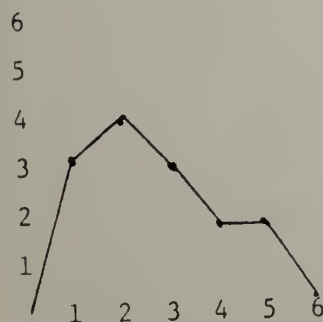
WITHDRAWING

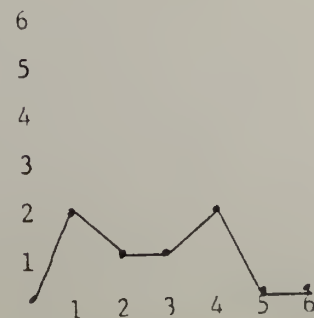
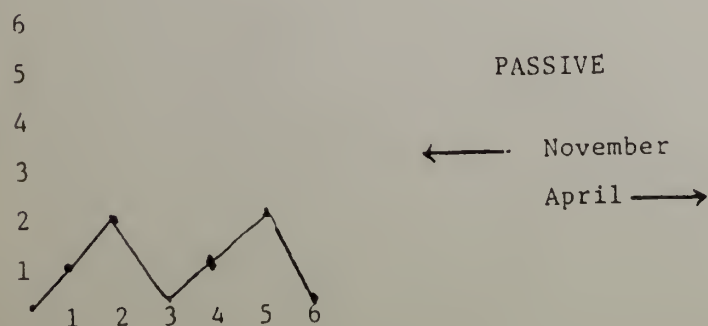
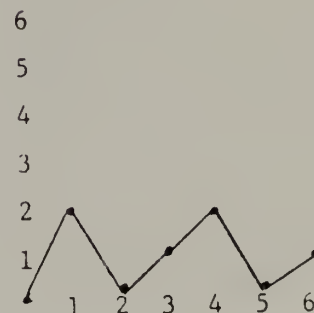
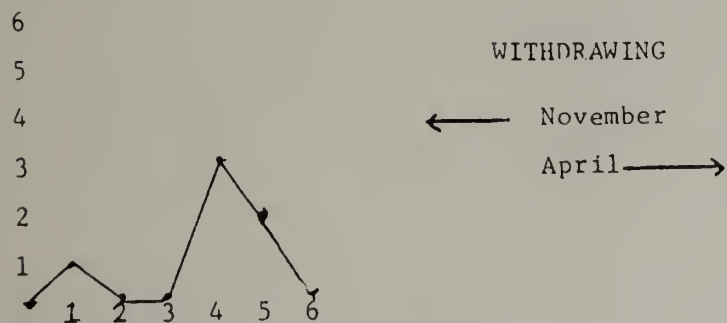
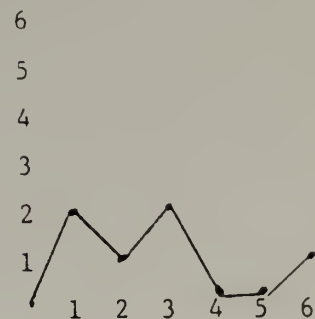
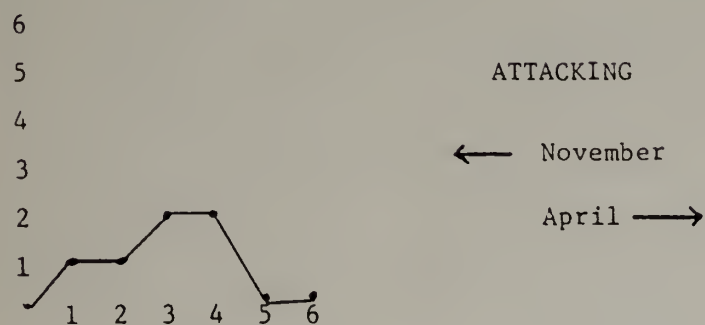
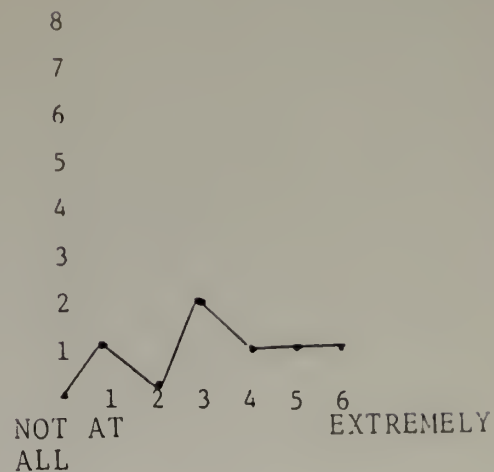
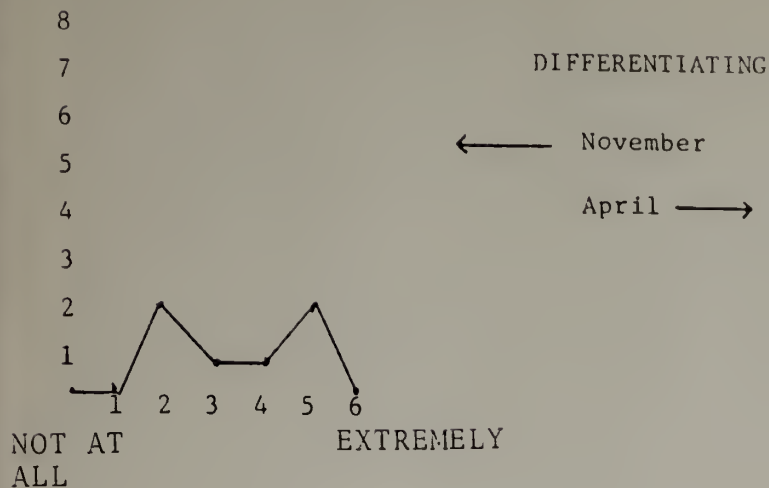
← November
April →



PASSIVE

← November
April →

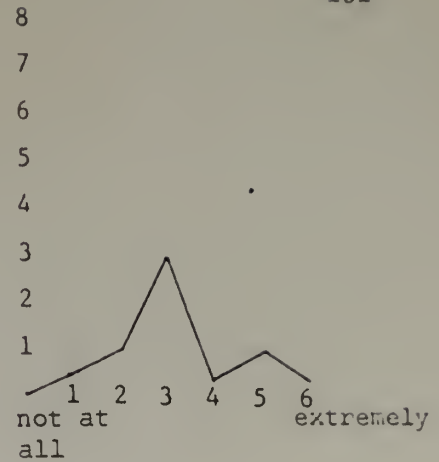
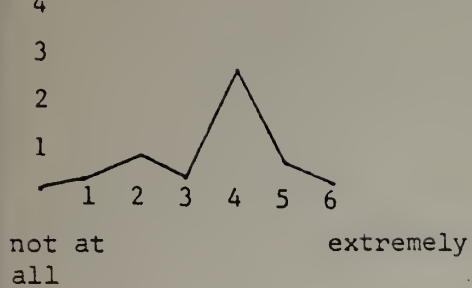




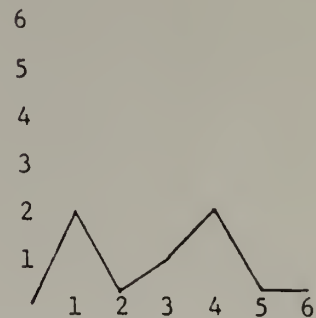
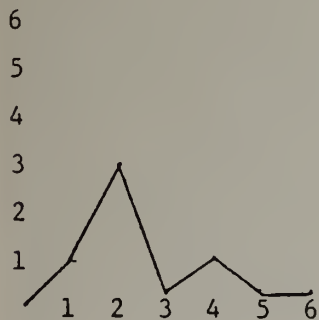
MOTHER
(N=5)

191

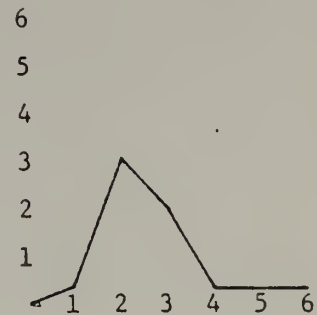
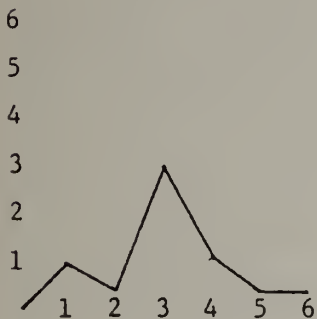
DIFFERENTIATING

← November
April →

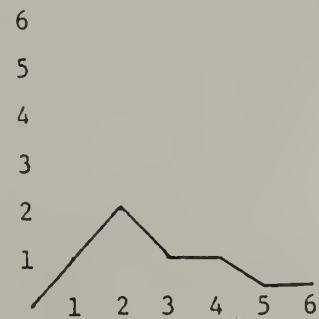
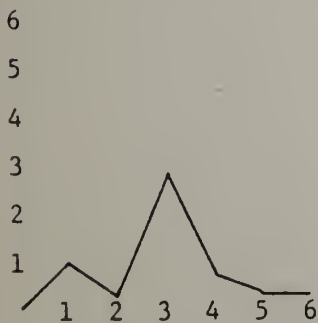
ATTACKING

← November
April →

WITHDRAWING

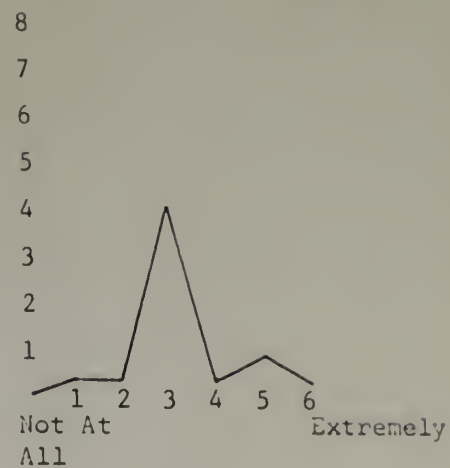
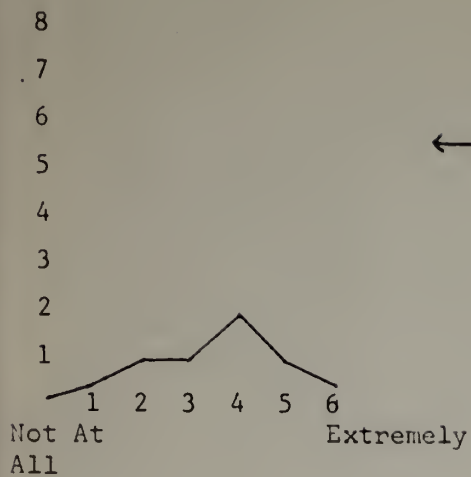
← November
April →

PASSIVE

← November
April →

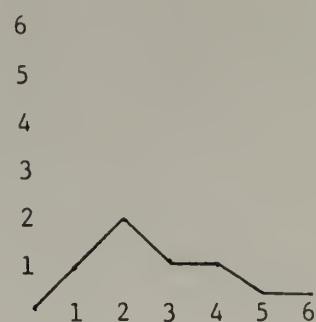
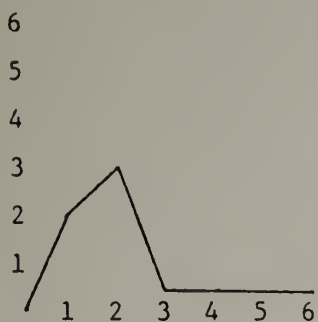
DIFFERENTIATING

← November
April →



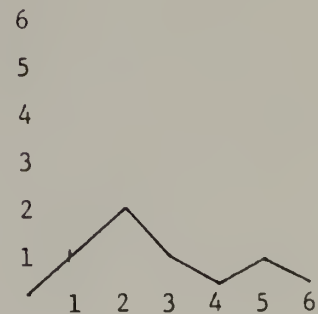
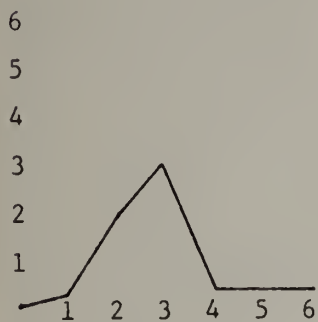
ATTACKING

← November
April →



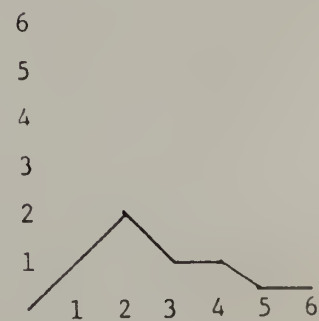
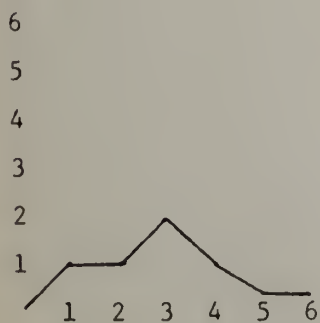
WITHDRAWING

← November
April →



PASSIVE

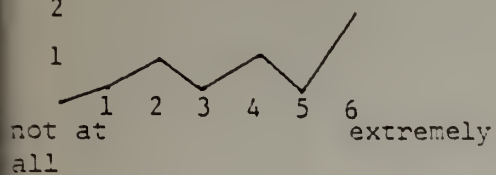
← November
April →



DIFFERENTIATING

← November

April →



8

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not at all

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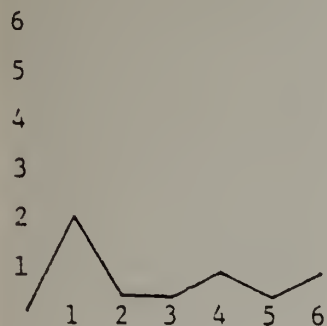
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6

ATTACKING

← November

April →



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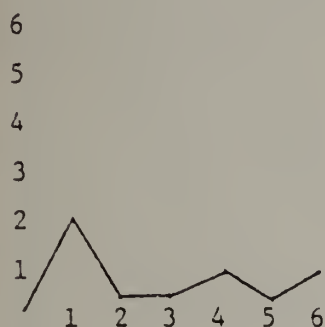
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WITHDRAWING

← November

April →



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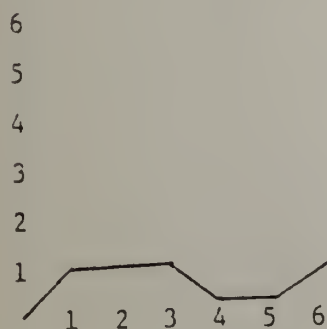
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PASSIVE

← November

April →



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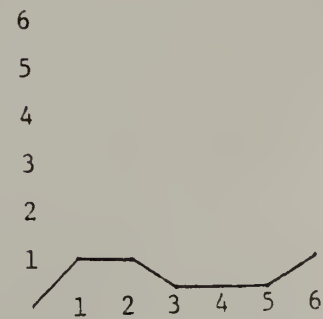
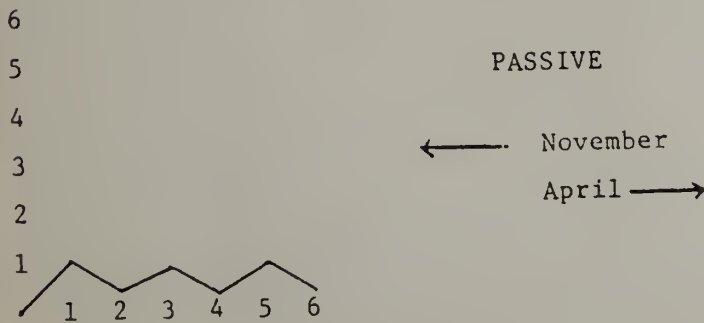
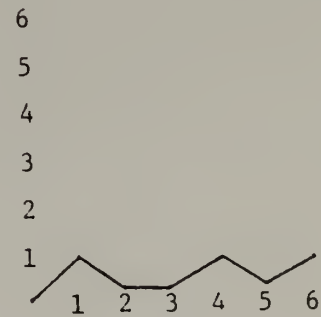
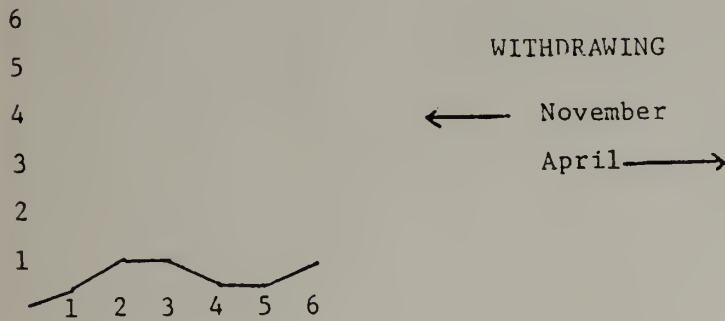
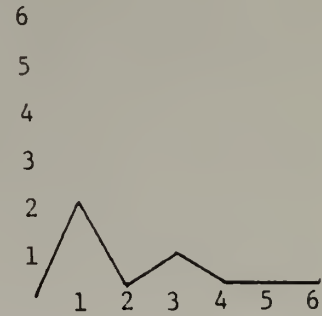
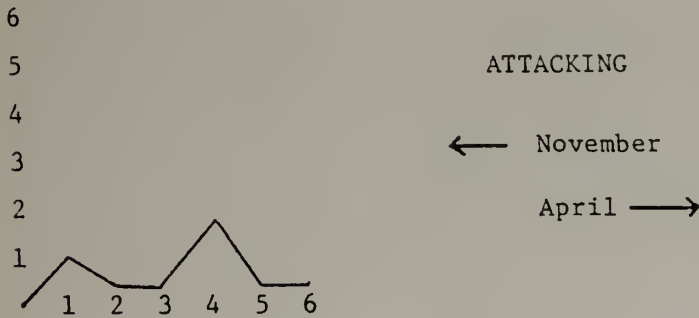
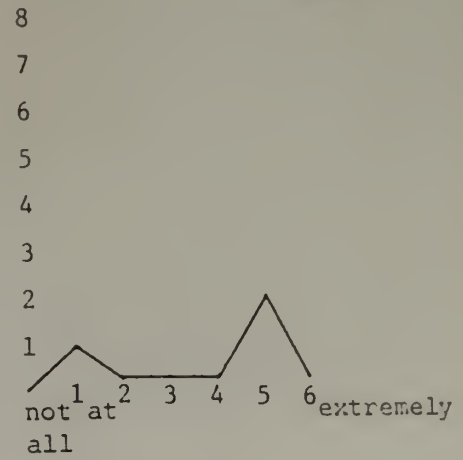
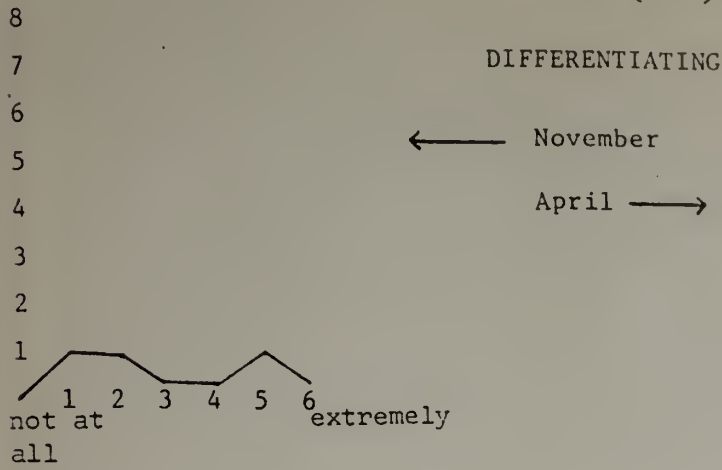
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1

2

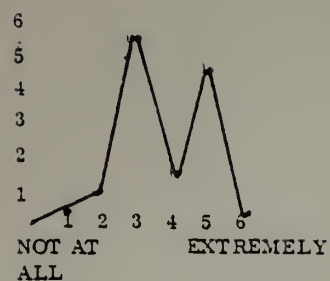
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APPENDIX E

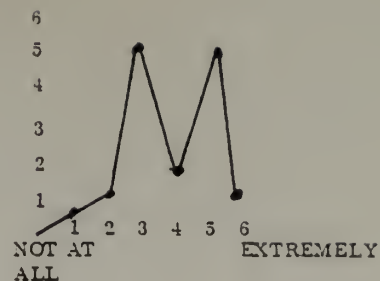
Graphs: Level of Satisfaction

GROUP ONE

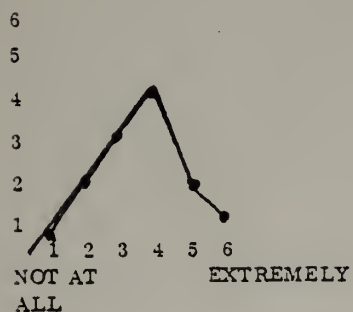
APPENDIX E
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION
MOTHER (N=14)

← November

April →

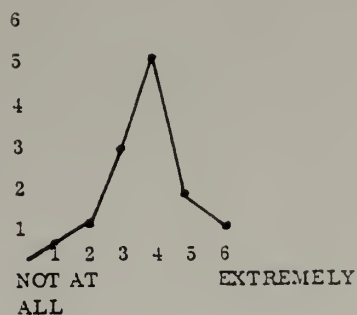


FATHER (N=12)

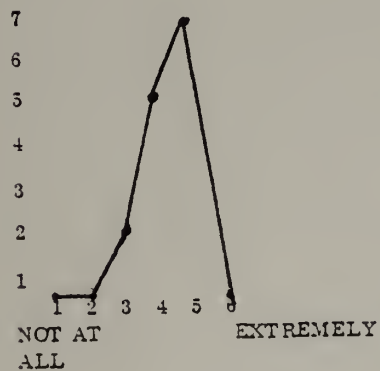


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April →

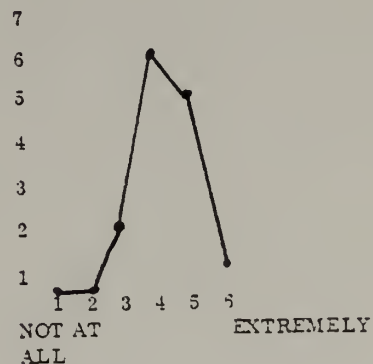


SPOUSE (N=14)

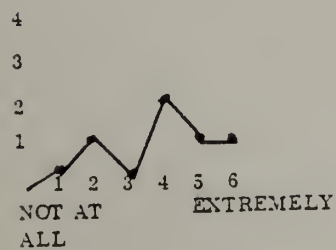


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April →

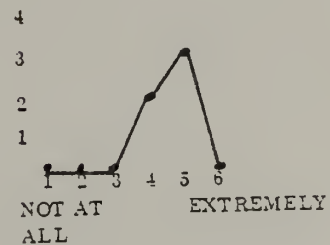


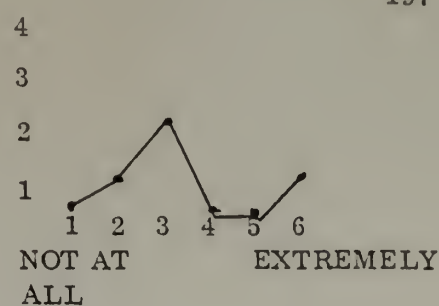
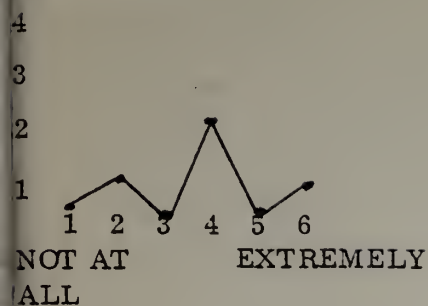
EX-SPOUSE (N=5)



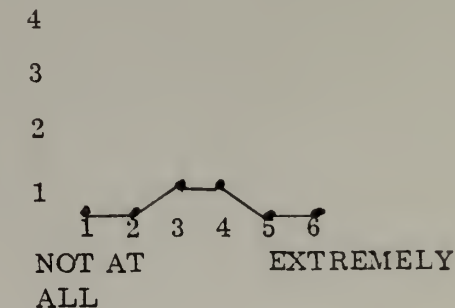
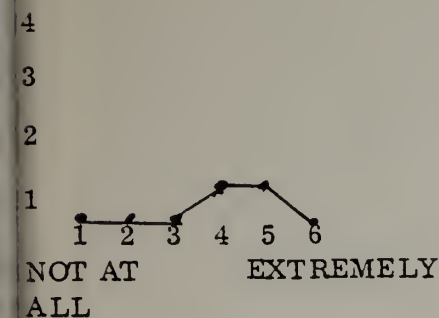
← November

April →

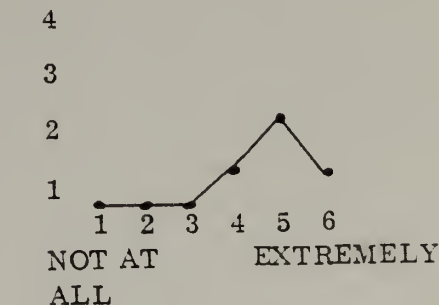
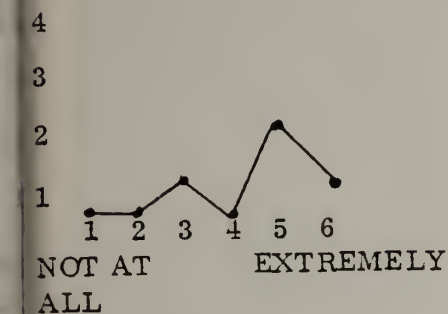




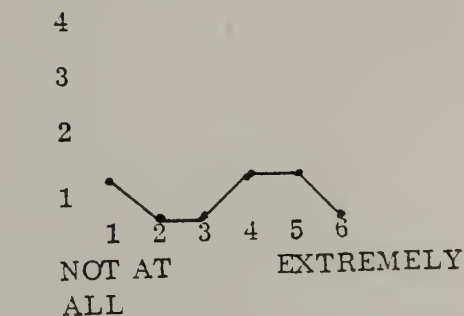
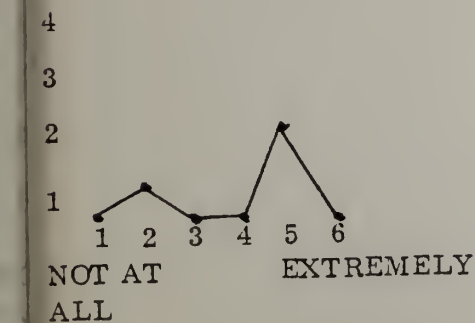
FATHER (N=2)



SPOUSE (N=4)



EX-SPOUSE (N=3)



APPENDIX F

Transcript of a Taped Interview

- A. What I'd like to do is compare your answers from last time with this time and see what change has taken place and see if you can explain some of the change to me.
- X. Actually I have compared mine with my record.
- A. Oh, you did. I hope you compared it after you finished--
- X. Yes, I did. I didn't cheat. I also discovered that one of the sheets somehow is filled out wrong.
- A. One of these sheets?
- X. Yeh, when we get to it. Those answers aren't right, it's as though it's just the opposite of what it should be. I've forgotten which one it is.
- A. Maybe that will come to you when you get to it.
Your response to your mother in November, attacking, was a 1 and stayed as a 1. The withdrawing changed from a 5 in November to a 2 now. And the passive changed from a 5 to a 2. And the differentiating remained the same at 3. So the change is in the withdrawing and the passive qualities. What does that mean to you?
- X. It means I've stayed more actively involved with the family even when there's been stress, through letters and telephone calls, and I've realized that my response in the past from childhood on was to withdraw or pull back and not be there when things went wrong. I tried with my mother to reach out so I could understand her stress around, say things as my brother's wedding that is coming up, and not just be available emotionally to be there.
- A. Were you there? How were you there, this time? Is that what you mean you were there?
- X. Not physically. Well, one interesting-- this is the first time that I can ever remember since leaving (state) however many years ago, 25 years ago, that I have gone back twice within three months. I will have gone back when I go back at the end of this week, to see my mother and father. I'm going back for my brother's wedding. I've tried to be very active with them through letters and telephone calls in the past three months particularly because of the wedding coming up. In the past I

would have just kind of not been involved. I had to - - -

A. How were you not involved?

X. In the past?

Well, I didn't write much, I kind of ignored emotional issues, or with my brother's wedding I had every excuse not to go because I don't think, I'm not sure he wants me there, particularly, but I am determined to go and be a part of this brief family ceremony. And in the past, because of not knowing when the date was going to be, would have given me an excuse not to go. As it turned out when he finally set a date which required I change my trip to (state) because I was going down the week before, and I did a lot of changing around in order to go. One of the main reasons was because I know it's very important to my mother for me to be there, and that she tends to be very depressed and she, at one point a few weeks ago, she seemed to be compensating almost, which I felt was related to his getting married. She called up quite anxious. She was on medication, and had a medication change. Before I just would have been kind of annoyed, or not responded really in any fashion. Oh, maybe express concern, but not done anything. Just kept my distance.

A. So you're moving in, huh?

X. Yeh.

A. And that affects the withdrawing and the passive at the same time?

X. Yeh, I have trouble sorting those two out. They just are too close together.

A. To me withdrawing is a moving away--where passive is more a standing in place actually, a helpless, not doing anything---

X. Yeh. - - -

A. Do you have anything to say about what changed your behavior here? Or how it changed? What happened?

X. One of the major things happened to me in the program is that I don't have the anger or the rage at my mother that I did have, - - - it's disappeared. I can't say what's happened to it, but it's gone. I used to dread getting a letter from her when I'd see a letter from her I didn't even want to open it. Not really understanding why. Now I guess I have a more objective view of her. I'm glad to get a letter from her. I like to keep in touch. I'm concerned about her, I try to--I'm sorry I didn't

do this sooner because she's 78 now and not very well emotionally, and is not as available to communicate with me. But it's like losing the angry feeling that I had towards her that just dissipated last year.

A. You don't know how that went?

X. I think through getting to know more members of the family in particular my step sister, in taking a look at her side of the family over several generations, understanding her relationship with her half sisters and thinking in terms of her relationship with her own mother, her younger brother who died, and hearing about her from my aunt, and from her son, my cousin, and they have such a different view of my mother than I did. Just looking at her position in the family, well, she was the youngest of her half sisters--there were 4 older half sisters by her father's first marriage, and so she was the oldest natural child of her mother, but the youngest of 5 girls in the combined families so that she was her father's, actually, 7th child, because he had lost two sons. I began to think in terms of her birth, perhaps him wishing he had another son, and then he lost his third son, her little brother died, and somehow she was very tied in with her own mother and that kind of relationship. I got ambivalent, I think I projected down. Somehow I just don't--the feelings are gone, just the greatest accomplishment to me, I can't say it was done other than studying the family.

A. So that happened first--the losing that layer of anger?

X. Yea, I think it did.

A. Does that free you up to observe your own behavior, or free you up to intervene- - -

X. Yes, I feel much more comfortable with her. It's the first time I've been able to use humor with her - - -

A. Let's look at your dad now, what happened. Attacking stayed the same, oh the process is practically--it is the same. The withdrawing moved from a 5 to a 2 and passive from a 5 to a 2, differentiating stayed the same. What's the process involved there?

X. It is mainly being more active and in touch by letter and telephone calls rather than in the past I would write them together a letter--now I write in spurts, sometimes I'll write once a week for several weeks, individual letters to each of them. I haven't had the anger with my father. I always felt closer to him. We don't really talk about meaningful things. But it's mainly as with my mother, trying to really move in and be available and be somebody who's interested in the family and who.

is available to be there in terms of time---

A. How have you done that in the past three months with your dad?

X. Mainly through letters. The last three months, February, March, April, I kind of tied in a visit towards the end of January. I was thinking this was towards the end of April and I made a visit there with my son, one of the best visits we've had in a long time.

A. What happened with your Dad then?

X. With Dad I can't say I've made a lot of progress in really communicating one-to-one around big issues. I tried to talk to him about death. I tried to open it up through the mail, but he has a way of not answering it. Though at times he gives me an opening to talk about it and I don't seem to respond to those times, and we go back and forth, maybe we'll get to it. Ummmm. . . mainly trying to be more available, and begin to write to him in a different manner and correspond with him as a separate person from my mother. It's very hard. When I telephone home--not to talk to both of them at the same time, because they both get on the phone and when I'm talking to one, the other one is always on the phone listening before I even know it. It's hard when I go home to have any individual time with my parents, they're usually in the same room at the same time. But it's just a feeling, I can't say I've accomplished much as far as talking about emotional issues. Just a feeling of having moved in more, I've been more available and become a busybody--in my father's--He doesn't use the term busybody, but says I'm becoming just like my cousin. His cousin who went around asking everybody a lot of questions and showed interest in people. Daddy said that to me at lunch one day when I visited in January. He said, "You remind me of my cousin, who if somebody had been married for nine months and she would go back to see them, she would say 'now honey, when are you going to have a baby, it's just about that time.'" My cousin was also murdered by her grandson, so I don't know whether there's a message in that, or if I'm getting too nosey, or what. But his cousin was just the one in the family who kept up with everybody, very interested in everybody and everything. If you came to town, she was going to know that you were there, she was going to come by and see you and she was going to be concerned about what happened to you, your children, your wife, more than anybody else in my family. So somehow I have, since her death two years ago, I think my father sees me as filling that role. I think he has mixed feelings about it - - -

- A. I'm mostly interested in this comparison in looking at your relationship with your mother, father and your spouse, so let's move over to your spouse. Look at November--your attacking response was 4 and moved to a 3, withdrawing was a 4 and which has stayed the same, passive was 4 which has moved to a 3 and differentiating was 3 and stayed the same. Is there anything significant there that you could explain the changes? Which are not as dramatic as your parents, but somewhat of a change.
- X. As I did this, I at times had the feeling to some extent that maybe I am getting more fused with my spouse, since I'm less fused with my parents than I thought, this is something I've got to watch, because if this happens---It's interesting, (spouse) is the only one that ever gets the attacking. My children don't get it, my parents don't get it.---A funny aside, (spouse) mother gave me permission before we were married, to get angry, knowing I wasn't that type, and I've been quite freely attacking him where I wouldn't with my family or my children.
- A. There doesn't seem to be a great deal of change here with spouse.
- X. No, I've been more aware of withdrawing and becoming passive under stress, with friends, just with people in general, people I work with, friends, trying not to be that way but take an active move towards (spouse) at times when I felt like withdrawing. I'm also aware that (spouse) does the withdrawing and passivity with me, and how it effects me, so I've tried to change that, but there hasn't been that much change.
- A. Have you worked as much on your relationship with (spouse) as you have with your parents these past three months?
- X. Yes, I think I have.
- A. Is there any significant other that you have worked on that you'd like to talk about?
- X. I don't think so, except the biggest change of all has been with my son, I don't know if that would show up in this, or not.
- A. What's happened there?
- X. It's just I'm very differentiated from him and seeing him as differentiating very much, at 23, and working on, as though he were going to Bowen. Working on his relationship with his grandparents, with his (other parent) with me, and asking me a lot about Bowen theory. I don't know if that's significant.

A. Is he child two?

X. Yes.

A. November (with your son) that attacking was a 1 which stayed the same, withdrawing then was a 4 which has moved to a 1, passive was a 4 and moved to a 1, differentiating a 3 and moved up to a 5. That's quite a bit of change there.

X. It's part of his working on it, his wanting to go and see his grandparents which he hasn't done in years. He's been very interested in all the portraits on the wall, all these people, to learn about the culture of the area, which he never has understood. He is trying very hard to make a really conscious effort to make a relationship with me and his (other parent) separately and not have to be the peacemaker, which he had always been in the triangle. In talking to me about it on the plane coming back from (state), and one of the most beneficial things was his being able to be more objective about the style in which my family communicates. And talking to me about how my parents and brother and I - - - that my parents and brother are either telling a funny story, or they are talking about things or current events, - - - very intellectual kinds of things, and you get close to feelings - - - how they shoot off into one of those directions. He could see it more clearly than I could.

A. What's inspired him to get into this work? What's affected him?

X. I think probably the feeling in effect, he was too close to me and having a very complacent relationship with his (other parent) during adolescence. I think it partly started maybe because he was in therapy for about nine months when he was 16-17 which he feels was very meaningful experience. And kind of being interested in, though I never talked much about what I was doing at Georgetown, he would ask about Bowen Theory and I would tell him about triangles. He could see how he was triangled in. He was also saying, "I don't want to happen to me what's happened to (other parent) and (other parent's) father, where (spouse) is very much cut off from family. I don't want that to happen to me. Do you know I've really been working on that the past 2-3 years." I said, "Yes," And then he asked me, "Do you feel left out because of that?" And I said, "No, because you and I also have a one to one relationship." So that, let's see (I was in Washington two weeks before Georgetown. (spouse) was feeling kind of down. (Son) stayed home from college two extra days when he planned to go back and work on some papers--just for the purposes of being with (other parent). - - - Went out to lunch, played backgammon, chess - - - and talked a lot.) (Other parent) was just ecstatic over it, and said that now (spouse) wished for that kind of relationship with own father. Then two days later I got a letter from (son), just a cute note addressing me as (X) with (title) after it, saying, "I'm just trying - - -"

"
your new title, and sending me something out of TIME magazine about paradoxical instructions. I could just see his maintaining this one-to-one position with both of us and really making an effort also writing his grandparents. Well, he said he started two or three years ago working his relationship with his (parent). But I kind of see--have the feeling of seeing what a differentiated person, not completely differentiated, but he can move in and out with us now without getting anxious or upset in seemingly handling everything very well for a 23 year old. Our daughter can't do that yet, I can't do it with my own family yet, but he's the one that's most free.

- A. That's interesting. That would be an interesting question to ask too. You know, your saying that makes me think of a statement "if you change yourself in the system the system begins to change," I guess I would kind of wonder if your own change with your parents hasn't had some effect on freeing him up, him too, to make a change with this too. I would think of it that way but I'd like to give you some of the credit---
- X. I can't quite pinpoint it.
- A. That's interesting though. That's a nice second generation story.
- A. Moving on--planned strategies for change, letters, etc.--ok, last time, November, you wrote your mother two times, you telephoned her one time, and you made no visits. This time you wrote to your mother five times, you telephoned her one time, and you made one visit for the purpose of differentiating or detriangling. That's an up by a small margin, certainly the letter writing it's up, and the visit, that January visit, right?
- X. Yes.
- A. Anything different in your response? What do you see as having changed in the way of contact with them?
- X. You mean in the actual handling of the contact?
- A. Yes.
- X. Well, writing to them individually and trying to look for every opportunity in what my mother writes to me, to pick up on something of value to kind of pursue, to deepen our relationship. I'm having trouble as my mother tends to get agitated and be very depressed and I have had some difficulty in trying to respond to that. With my (supervisor) making all kinds of

suggestions like, have your mother go off medication. One thing I've never tried, and that I thought I might try, is to ask my mother if I should start medication as a preventive so I won't have the severe depression that she has had.

(Laughter)

- X. (Supervisor's) idea was to tell your mother just to take--she's been on medication for years, and I haven't thought of that in terms of, this is dreadful, but she's been on it for years and nobody takes a look at it, or considers whether she should go off of it, and I was thinking, if this were a patient I was working with on my job I would think that was horrendous. But it was my mother and I kind of accepted it. I haven't done much with that except express concern to her that--did she really need to be on medication which is easier for me to do than to use humor or the reversal, as (supervisor) expressed. But I expressed concern and then I got quite anxious because my mother had her medication changed and then called up. She was just climbing the walls, and I felt some responsibility. Then I got very anxious. Then I decided instead of getting on the phone with (supervisor), which I was tempted to do, that I would calm down for a day or two and see what happened. Then she went back to see her psychiatrist. I think she's on (other medication), a strange combination, but I think she was having some side effects from the reaction of changing the medication. Kind of calmed down. I asked her if she was going off medication completely and (supervisor) said great, but I said I'm not a doctor and I'm telling mother to go off medication. I think she is reacting to my brother's leaving home at 44 and remarrying. It's a systems thing, but I've tried--I know I'm getting off--but I've tried humor with my mother, something I have never done before, and she's responded differently when I've kidded her. It's been a nice feeling; a closeness that I haven't had before. It's been real serious (previously).
- A. Hmmmm, I'd like to talk about that too, under the humor section. Of course so much of this is planned in---I'm interested in looking at the change in the number of times when this contact--took place.
- X. That's just a -- habit too. It seems to me that last summer I wrote once a week, one point in the past year I was writing every week, every Sunday afternoon seemed to be my letter writing time, and then I got very busy at work, didn't write for a time, then it kind of picked up again. I'm making more of an effort, particularly knowing my--that my brother's wedding was coming up and (supervisors) advice was--jack up your level of contact with your family.

- A. I see with your dad your letter writing in November was 1, telephone call 1, visits--no.
- X. What was that for, three months?
- A. Yes, September, October, November, and that's moved up to 5 letters, 1 telephone call, 1 visit. Do you keep the letters equal? When you write one to your mom do you write one to your dad?
- X. Not necessarily. My mother tends to write me much more than my father. He usually writes only if it has to do with money. If there's an interest check that comes from some property, or he wants to tell me how to handle the loan or capital gains, under income tax--
- A. You can expect to hear from you father around this time of year?
- X. Yeh, about money--
- A. I see, the reasons were that your letter writing went up more this time is because it's near income tax time--it has nothing to do with your detriangling--
- X. Yes, It's April 15th. Now, I have recently gotten a letter from him that had nothing to do with money, which was very unusual. It was in response to one that I wrote to him. One of the most beautiful letters I had ever gotten from him in my life. I sent it to (supervisor) to read--it was delightful.
- A. What was that?
- X. This had to do with the use of light touch of humor, and the fact that my brother was going to get married, supposedly he'd been interested in getting married since late summer, but they didn't know when. My brother couldn't quite be pinned down, and umm, so when I was there in January, it was still (brother's fiancée) my parents had her for dinner, but they didn't quite know what her last name was, which I thought was intriguing. If I asked before she came over what's her last name, mother couldn't quite remember. I liked her very much, but it was when I kept asking my mother and father, are they really going to get married, where are they going to live, and my father said, you're just like my cousin asking all these questions. So I wrote him, this was after going to Georgetown, and after writing to (supervisor). It was something I wrote to dad and said, I've got an idea, why doesn't my brother move in with (fiancee) and try it out before he marries. (Fiancee's)

mother lives in the home and is a divorcee in her 50's, and goes out dancing with her boyfriend every night while my brother and his girlfriend sit at home and help with the children 3 and 5. I said her mother could move in with her boyfriend and they could try all this out before it's final-- I'm sure my dad gave the letter to my mother to read. Which was probably very shocking that I would suggest such a thing. I got a letter back from my dad that never mentioned that comment, but just a very humorous letter about the big event for them was that my brother's apparent wedding, (though he had never actually proposed, but they seem to be talking about everything else). That he had come to my father and asked what do you do about a ring, and my father said, "well you know, you've been engaged more times than I ever have, you know that better than I do." ---And then something about my mother fantasizing the wedding and had now conceded that they could come in the side door of the Church, and who would be at the reception and what everybody would wear, and how they would act, and my father said, "But when I suggested that she might ask the principles involved she doesn't like that at all." Just a really humorous letter--

- A. Do you think in any way that he picked up the response?
- X. Then my (spouse) said, "You know, I think that your father responded to you on a different level because you made that comment with some humor. He doesn't see you as the prim and proper lady he's kind of viewed you as, like your mother, and that freed him up to write this funny letter." I said, "You're really into Bowen"--it was an interesting letter. I'm saving it because my father is a junior, and my brother is a third, and his son is the 4th, and my father in his letter refers to my brother as the 3rd. My comments on that to (supervisor) were "How about the interesting and generational flow in that letter." He also wrote me that my nephew, my brother's son will be 14 in October, has freedom of choice whether he's going to live with his father or his mother. Typical of my father, he never expressed any feelings in his letter about my brother getting married, never expressed any feelings whether he hopes that his grandson would choose to live in (city) with his father versus in (city) with his mother. You have to read between the lines because he probably must have mixed feelings about my brother's wedding because of its' effect on my mother, and added responsibility for my brother, and I have the feeling that he hopes that his grandson chooses---
- A. X.--your mother and dad are not giving at all typical responses now-- let's stay with it--mom not at all typical in November, and somewhat typical now.

X. Yes, one example is when I called and we had several telephone conversations about whether I was coming to my brother's wedding. I was saying I wanted to come but he couldn't quite set the date because it would depend on how many cases he had in court and they were going to get married when they could get a couple of days off, could not really have a wedding trip at that time. But I've kidded mother a couple of times on the phone about, (there was something about collusion between us about really wanting to have a wedding and reception that my brother didn't want). I asked her what she was going to wear. She kind of laughed and then they called and asked me to come home after Georgetown. I said, "well fine, I'd like to," and then I said, "Hey wait a minute, are we trying to set it up." Then she said, maybe your brother will decide to get married while you were here. I said, "Uh, oh, here we go again, mother. You and I colluding again and planning a wedding. We want a party." And she kind of laughed. That sounds sort of simple but it's a new way of relating to my mother.

A. Rather than taking an initiative that could have gone rather heavy---

X. It could have been very heavy. And my father had lightened it up in his letter implying that my mother wanted him to come down the long aisle at the church but now she was settling for the side door when my brother hasn't been to church in 30 years or something. My mother's understanding is that you should get married in the church in (city), so my father lightened it up at first through his letter, which maybe freed me up to make a light touch with her over the phone, with my father listening in.

A. So your behavior with your dad has changed the same way from a 1 (letter) to a 3.

X. Yes, an example of that was the letter.

A. Is this something new for him? You said it was not at all typical back in November.

X. Yeh, he's been very serious--

A. Hmmm - - -

X. I think up all kinds of wild things to do - - -

A. That's kind of successful though, huh?

- X. Yeh, but I find--happens to me at Georgetown, I don't know if it happens with you, but (supervisor) actually would suggest something that was so far out for me that I couldn't possibly say that, but then I would kind of meet it half way in my own style.
- A. What has it done for you, this humor, with your parents?
- X. I don't feel as anxious, such as going down this weekend. I feel like I can go with a light touch, and I haven't any plans of action, I'm just going to go and be low key. I feel a little more comfortable. I guess I do have some kind of plan trying to stay located, and use humor. And my family, you know, my parents and brother have a great sense of humor and tell funny stories all the time, but we have never used it in a light way about heavy emotional issues.
- A. Use of reversal with your mom is not at all typical in November, and now a 2, a slight change.
- X. I can't give an example of how--I guess I've been thinking about trying reversals, maybe that's it. It's more a thinking process than having these reversals, when before I couldn't even consider it.
- A. So you don't mean to say that you have been using it necessarily, but thinking about it?
- X. Like what I want to do about the medication --
- A. I've just realized that I've skipped over your use of humor with your (spouse). I'd like to go back with that. In November it was a 2 and now it's a 3. Anything significant to say about that?
- X. I don't know, I try to make it light when things get heavy. Just feel like it's loosened up some, and that (spouse) responds to it very well, not so serious.
- A. Your use of reversals, going back to reversals, with your dad was 1 in November, now is a 2.
- X. I think, there again, it's more the thinking process. Well, the kind of, you call it reversals, kind of suggesting that my brother move in with his girlfriend-- is that a reversal?
- A. Reversal is something you don't necessarily mean but--

X. Yeh. To do that in (city, state) would be unheard of--

A. With your spouse again, the same process, huh?

X. Yeh.

A. No, no, no, excuse me--in November it was a 1 and went to a 4.

X. I don't know if I can give an example. It's funny, I was surprised when I see it has gone to a 4. Wait a minute, this is issue dealing, ohhhh, here we are. I still have 1. We've got this out of order. This you can say it's more of the thinking process but I haven't actually done it.

A. It stayed the same actually in terms of the number of how you responded to with your mother and father.

X. I guess that was the personal letter writing that probably---

A. With your spouse it has changed---

X. It's more with son than with spouse. Kind of trying to switch things around when things are heavy, look at it in a light vein--spouse has been having a lot of job problems, my saying over the last situation where (spouse) had just lost a job--of my reacting, just being very angry at first. Then I'm very erratic about it; at times being able to shift, by saying, "Isn't that great, that you're free you don't have---you have more time to do other things, I think how great this is." That's a reversal.

A. What does using reversal do to you?

X. It makes me feel very good at the time and it makes me less anxious and helps me to put things into perspective that this is not the end of the world. It's something that ties in to looking back on different generations. Spouse's job problem these past few years, I have seen the same thing happen to my maternal and paternal grandparents at the same age.

A. What is it?

X. (age). And it goes back, hearing my aunt talk about her parents problems then it didn't sound so heavy and terrible, and looking back over the generations and seeing what has happened to the family helped me put a perspective on our situation and to see it as not so catastrophic, see how something good can come out of it, why it isn't so awful. That allows me to see--say that to spouse.

- A. Sounds to me as though you, it gives you a longer view of the situation. Gives you some space. Interesting.
- X. I can't do it all the time. It comes and goes.
- A. I'd like to see/maintain "I" position. . . OK with your mom in November it was a 4 and now it's a 2.
- X. This is the one I think is off. . . yeh, I haven't filled out. This is the one that isn't filled out correctly. This is the one that hit me when I was looking at it - - -
- A. The November one? It's not correct?
- X. Yeh, it should have been more like a 1. I don't know what I was filling it out. I don't know. It's just off. I wondered, shall I tell Anne-- I thought you might have already put this into the computer or something and it was too late to change it? That's wrong. It would have fouled up your data.
- A. Why don't I give you a pencil--
- X. Want me to do another one, or just change it?
- A. Just change it.
- X. I'm compulsive and accurate about things, and if you were to put that through--this would be hard to explain. Umm, I would have thought I would have answered it with a 1 last fall.
- A. But it wasn't at all typical, huh, and instead you answered it as a 4.
- X. Yes, this would be very hard to explain. I feel that I have moved up some with them, but don't intend to make clear my position to them.
- A. Has your estimate of yourself changed in any way?
- X. Maybe I have higher expectations of "I" positions. I don't know. Is that what you meant? Maybe I, I can't, maybe I thought I was making "I" positions then and then I realize now that they weren't. The kind of "I" positions I would like to be making now but I - - -
- A. What would be the difference in your interpretation of an "I" position?

X. I don't know--it's changed.

A. Well, I mean there are times when we can't always explain everything that we do.

X. My emotions get in the way of my intellect on this one page. (much laughter). My anxiety went up and I overrated myself. Last night I looked and said--where did this come from. I kept looking at the top of the page and then comparing it with the, you know, was it because it wasn't labeled at the top that I, could I have rated it the opposite?

A. Oh, I see what you mean, that's a possibility. That's part of the reason for interviews. It helps to unskew, skewed data.

X. Yeh. . . more with my (spouse)--I guess it's been an erratic pattern because last spring, a year ago, I was making some progress with (spouse) to help improve my "I" position and saying, "This is what I think and what I will do and won't do," and more with (son), but I can't account for the difference. I'm sorry I threw you off there.

A. That's all right.

X. That's obviously something to work on. "I" positions.

A. What about issue dealing? That was not at all typical in November with your mother and now it's moved to a 2.

X. Yeh. Umm, trying to deal with them, trying to get them to talk about death through letters, but I haven't succeeded. Except I guess (supervisor) said you are succeeding, your mother is open and talking about it. I wrote her a letter once about my name. I had three different names by the time I was 9 months old. And I was teaching a course in family therapy for our staff and was going to do some experiential stuff around how you got your name and who you were named for, how you thought your birth affected your family system and I wrote my mother about that I was confused about what I was first named. It I thought I only had two names, X and then Y, it turned out I had a third name, Z, which was her father's. You wonder what's wrong with me--"I" positions. That kind of thing I've been opening up with my mother some, but in that she talks some about death and it was because of the death of her two half brothers whom she said had both been named (X) for their father that they asked that I not be named for him because of the hex, that he wasn't superstitious, but do we need another (Z) in the family, when two died in infancy?

A. Oh, I see. . .

X. And (supervisor) felt that was kind of my mother was willing to talk about death from that point of view. There was an opening there. I tried to take distance from it not asking about her death or my father's death, but saying, "You know, I've been thinking I might get killed on the Turnpike driving to work, and I'm wondering if my affairs are in order and maybe there's something I need to talk to you about, mother"-- but no response.

A. So you've brought up the issues?

X. Yeh, whereas a few years ago my father was saying, "I think I should take you to the cemetery and do you know where the family plot is," and I was--and he dropped the subject. And now I'm pushing it, and not getting any response. Both of them - - -

A. But that's been one of the issues that your folks. . . With (spouse) there was a 5 in November, a 4 now. What does that mean to you?

X. I didn't realize I'd gone down. Um, I feel like I bring up things with (spouse) more, more rationally, though currently I'm very erratic and can get very angry over the situation about (spouses) job and at times I can bring up an issue that has to do with that very rationally and calm and at other times I get angry and say all sorts of things I wish I hadn't said, so I'm going through a kind of -- stages-- but in the past would have just withdrawn and been passive and avoided the issues. Also found that (spouse) does the same thing and I've been able to draw (spouse) out about what really happened, when something went wrong. In the past we kind of talked about it and then it was pushed under the rug.

A. What effect does it have on you? Dealing with the issues.

X. More calm--more in control of things. More in control of myself, my reactivity--talk it out rather than act it out, somehow, getting angry--

A. It will be interesting to see what effect this will have on you as, if you continue to pursue this with your parents.
Use of depersonalized examples is not a typical form---

X. I never even heard of that. It's something I've never heard discussed at Georgetown and it surprised me the last time it came into the question, and it something I used in therapy with people, like saying, "You know, sometimes a person does this and this under certain

circumstances you can handle it this way. It may not work for you," but---is this something you've gotten from your supervisor at Georgetown? Have you heard something that I haven't heard? Where did it come from?

- A. I think it is used more often in supervision than it is in direct detriangling. I have used it a few times myself with my father and gotten some "oh?" responses like that, so I put it in because it's been used a lot with me at Georgetown. My supervisor uses it a lot. But of course that's supervision, too. But that's where it came from. I might have also, and I leave this up to you. there's an interesting article on strategies by Carter and Orfanidis in Gueren's book, and some of these came from that. I don't know whether this particular one came from that or not.
- X. I could have written my father and said I have a friend who was getting married, or I know somebody next door that are living together, they're trying it out, that does work sometimes, that kind of thing. I'll have to try that.
- A. It's not so terribly important. It's not as important as some of the others, actually. OK. Level of satisfaction with your mom in November was 20% and now it's a 40%. How do you account for that?
- X. Just relating in a different way, feeling more comfortable, less anxious around her.
- A. With your dad the movement has been exactly the same. Are they always going to stay the same?
- X. I don't know.
- A. How do you account for this staying the same now?
- X. I don't know. I have no hesitation putting in the same, maybe I've been very confused. . . It's the way it comes out.
- A. OK. With your spouse, your level of satisfaction is 40% and it stayed the same.
- X. That surprised me. I tried to make it a 60% or 80% but I couldn't really do it. So that was the same as last time.
- A. Yeh, let's see.

X. With my parents it's gone up. . .

A. With your spouse it stayed the same. . .

X. It stayed the same all the way through except with my son.

A. Child one was a 40% and now is a 40%, child two was an 80% and still is an 80.

X. I always wanted to put him a 100, but I thought no one would be 100.

A. So they stayed the same.

X. I would have made him a 90 I think--which you wonder how that compares with all of this. Except I guess maybe all the work is going into this, which is kind of reflected in this so this has stayed the same. I have the feeling one put a 90 in there. . .

A. But it's a stronger 80 than it was the last time? So there's movement there. What about the emotional cutoffs? With your mom percentage of the time did you feel emotionally cut off. Your November response was 80, that's dropped to a 20. That's a dramatic drop. What's your explanation there?

X. I just feel I've worked at not being cut off and just being involved. . . as I sit here questioning why it dropped from an 80 to a 20, maybe a 40 is more reasonable because I'm the one trying to move in and not be cut off and still have the feeling that----- that I'm kind of available and yet, I'm not cutting them off as much but I haven't really gotten that much closer to them. I'm more in there working at things rather than cutting things off. So whether this means you're that much closer to them and talking about real issues and whether it means--I was thinking in terms of, I guess I don't know exactly what the emotional cut off was. I feel I'm very much in there trying to be emotionally tied in with them without reacting, but on a cool level more than I've ever been. May be it should be 40 instead of 20. Because they're not really letting me in that much, I guess. We're not really dealing with every heavy issue. I kind of feel very active and important in who's in there and available---

A. There's a big gap of change, which I think probably the same reflects the effort you've put into it, not necessarily the effort they've put in the same amount or responded to all of your efforts.

X. And one thing I learned in my brother's reaction to my wanting to come to his wedding, was that just because I was ready to be more of a part of the family didn't mean he was ready to receive me. That was kind of a shock. I'm not sure whether he even wants me at his wedding. Maybe he's making too big a deal out of it, or he doesn't want big (sibling) to come, I don't know. But I was gung-ho to go you see, and thinking of course now that--cut off there I'm ready to come back in but I don't think he is.

A. Sounds like the other side of the coin.

X. Yes.

A. X, while we're talking about this, do you want to change that 20 to a 40.

X. I think I'd like to change it to a 40. I was very optimistic last night, or whenever I did this.

A. With your spouse, your level of emotional cut off was a 20 in November and now you've changed to a 40.

X. That's very much effected, I'm as I said, I'm very level with (spouse) right now but very upset with (spouse) at times and at other times in there dealing with the issues, so from week to week that might change.

A. So, your very what did you say?

X. Mood just changing a lot at times, being very upset. Just to cover things, and at times it just fluctuates.

A. OK. Level of differentiation. . . your father has moved from red to a green and your mom has moved from a red to a green which is really moving from an uncomfortable fusion to an uncomfortable differentiation in November to April.

X. I find it hard to distinguish those two but felt every different movement toward trying to differentiate but not quite making it.

A. Which has been reflected in much of what you've already said.

X. Yeh.

A. With child two you moved from a green, uncomfortable differentiation to blue--just reflected in much of what you said.

- A. Let's look at deceased members statement: "I talked with my mother about her mother and their relationship briefly." Is that saying the same as you said before, bringing up the issue of death? Or is there something more you want to say on that?
- X. I've tried at any point in time to try to understand the relationship because of the projection process from her mother to my mother to me and then to my (child).
- A. What does that projection process. . .
- X. Umm, kind of an ambivalent, conflicted, at times overprotective and at other times hostility. If I could understand some of the things that went on between my mother and her mother, particularly some of the positive things rather than only hearing the negative, which I was always aware of as a child, that I could maybe understand my grandmother, her mother, with whom I was---used to spend a lot of time with them, was very close to them, more so than my mother. I wanted to get something positive in their relationship and one of the things my mother talked about very briefly and I seem to get these little vignettes with my mother when she talks. I guess it's true of anybody. About something meaningful and then we go off on something more superficial. My mother talked about the loss of her singing voice which she's never talked to me about before. I knew she used to have a beautiful voice, and I thought she had lost it in the 30's or 40's, but she said her voice had changed completely in late adolescence, early 20's before she married. She talked with me, and I supported her in what a loss that must have been to her. It was the first time she had ever told me the reason that she had gone from (state) to the (city) School of Music was to try to get back her voice. She got a voice back but at a different level and she could never have the career that she might have had if she kept the voice that she had. My aunt talked to me about it and tied it in with my mother teaching school and screaming at the sixth grade children and some of the boys were bigger than she was, and she was 19. Mother talked about what a loss it was to her mother, and to her and that her voice, that her mother had been very proud of her singing voice, and that the two of them had shared this loss. That was kind of a different way of talking about my grandmother. Something she had never done before. I wish I could get more of that. I don't know if that's the kind of thing you're talking about, but it gives a different picture of my grandmother and their relationship.
- A. What?--Do you know what you did to bring that up?
- X. How did that come up. . . sitting in my mother and father's library at night, hm, I don't remember how it came up, I remember writing it down

writing (supervisor) about it--But I began, it kind of tied in with my aunt referring to my mother as the risque member of that sibling group which absolutely startled me, and then I realized that back then in 1920 to go from (city) to (city) and study music, and my mother traveling around the country singing, must have been quite a thing for a woman to do. My mother also smoked and went to movies, which was very frowned upon. And my mother being considered risque was so foreign to me, but I don't know what led into this. It was something else meaningful that we were talking about. I think my mother was talking about feeling kind of down and depressed. How we got on the subject, I instigated it some way, I forgot--whether we were watching something on TV with somebody singing, I don't know. She did sing in churches and choirs and funerals in (city), but my grandmother never liked to hear her sing as a child---except that I look for openings to talk about things.

A. To lead into things anyway---

X. . . . my mother talking to me about her father and her relationship there--

A. What has been the most significant learning involving the family of origin research this past year and your response to get to bring up some thoughts to you - - -

X. Beginning to get a handle on my part--with my family and understand how my family operates as well as to appreciate the flexibility that was possible within my family system. I think I see them as a very rigid system. (Supervisor) has helped me to see, my gosh, there's all kinds of possibilities, I've got a lot of people just there waiting to relate if I just make the effort.

A. So has it been this response to you that has- - - distribute part of this feeling?

X. Yes, he's been very helpful. My son, helped me to see how my family operated after that one visit that should have seemed obvious, but I was so much in the system that I couldn't see--I guess that I'm at stage two. I have really been trying to see what my part in the whole thing is. I can see one of the things I have been picking up in the last few months is how I relate to (spouse) and how sometimes I come across just like my father comes across in my family at home, and other times I come across just like my mother. Both are ways that I don't like and I see in myself adopting the kind of know it all dogmatic attitude at times

which is like my father at times. And I catch myself doing that and trying to bite my tongue when something (spouse) does that I think could be done a little bit better, or another way, which is very trivial and doesn't make that much difference, I find myself saying, "Why are you going this way? Why aren't we? Isn't it closer if you go that way?" Something that has absolutely---doesn't make a bit of difference in the world. Why do I need to do that? It's kind of a put down attitude which is not helpful to (spouse). I probably do that with my brother without being aware of it. I see my daughter does it to her brother, but it kind of comes from my father, as a way of relating that I see that he uses at times, and I think I can see it kind of from his own father, but I don't understand his relationship with his own father. It's not a matter of blaming anybody either, but it's just seeing this pattern and then also finding myself talking of being anxious and depressed. Oh, my god, I sound exactly like my mother and doing it in maybe a kind of passive-aggressive way with (spouse) when I'm really saying, "I'm angry with you." Just kind of, thinking, hey, this is no way to be, kind of trying to look at more what part I played in the whole system, and part of it is seeing that I have been very unavailable at times. When things were rough and my mother was hospitalized with depression and had shock therapy--the first time I went to the hospital--In fact, my coming back on the train that night from Georgetown brought back such memories of my being on the bus. Spouse and I lived in (state) and the airlines were on strike and my mother was being hospitalized for depression. I got a telephone call. When I got on the bus I sat up all night on a Greyhound bus to go. We didn't have a baby sitter, and I didn't stay very long, but it was kind of a token really, of knowing, of feeling I should go, of guilt, but not really, not staying that long and using it as an excuse which was part of the reality that we didn't have anybody to take care of the children. I kind of got on the bus with, sat up all night both ways, stayed 2-3 days but could have been more available in some way to help them through that period. Then my mother had a second hospitalization ten years after that which was kind of vague, plus my brother went into a lot of emotional difficulties. I kind of locked him out in a way. I was never as helpful as I might have been but kind of kept distant, instead of being around, so that's kind of what I've been working on as my part in the scheme of things. Trying to change and get a plan--

- A. OK--What I'm mostly interested in, and I don't want to hold you up today--
- X. One thing I've learned too, is have a better understanding of the fit between spouse and me and that I can overfunction and (spouse) under-functions and the message at Georgetown last time: "Well just quite your job. Tell (spouse) you're going to cruise around the world a couple

of years like, then (spouse) will go at (spouse's) career, will pick up again." How can I do that?

A. Let me as a parting gift then before you leave--you're taking this trip around the world I recommended that you stay at this hotel in Sydney, Australia.

X. I knew I'd get a good tip from you.

A.--Thanks very much--

X. At times my having picked a job which requires overfunctioning and involvement with a lot of different things which I realized last summer my overfunctioning went sky high and I couldn't even find time to take a vacation and go to (state). As well as expense of it, and I guess tension which goes along with it--whether it's resistance, anxiety, fear of change, I don't know. I rationalize it as I did so many times--family visits, there is only so much time to be away, have the money, but I I'm sure it's more than that-----Some investment in status quo, maybe some resistance---

A. You're doing the best you can--

X. You may never see me again if I cruise around the world---

A. I would envy you. Thanks a lot.

X. Thank you---

